

Inclusive Education Practices for
Secondary School Students with
Disabilities in Bangladesh

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Acknowledgments

Inclusive education is a relatively new term in the education system of Bangladesh. It is both a precondition and a result of social history, which could undermine the existing values of the society. As the Father of the Nation of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman said, “Education will be the means of freedom.” In this case, only inclusive education can enhance freedom for students with disabilities and support the notion of social justice in education. However, it was a challenge to carry out a research study to explore teachers’ perspectives of inclusive education practices in Bangladesh. It was made possible with support from various people including family members, friends, colleagues, teachers and others.

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This study attempts to meet the requirement and vision of a better future for students with disabilities in mainstream education settings. I am truly confident that the findings of the study will serve as a guide to rethink the classroom practices within the development horizon of inclusive education in order to ensure the invisible and vulnerable group, the “students with disabilities” are included in mainstream education.

Abstract

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand and describe the inclusive education practices for students with disabilities in secondary schools in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, ensuring all children with disabilities attend schools especially mainstream classrooms is a priority, rather than ensuring the quality of instruction. An underlying belief in Bangladesh is that if quantity can be achieved, then quality will increase. This is why I decided to examine teachers' perspectives (central phenomenon) of inclusive education. There is no research that describes or supports Bangladesh teachers' perspectives.

Many theorists have taken different angles on the conceptualisation surrounding disability and education. This project is underpinned by the social constructivist view of disability that has developed from the works of Lev Vygotsky (1896 –1934). The underlying premise is that teachers are all experts in different ways, and that their different experiences and understandings are of value. On the basis of socio-cultural theory, a conceptual framework has been developed to understand inclusive practices which are viewed from two levels: the Macro and Micro levels. For delimitation in terms of time and scope, my research is located within the two components of micro level practice especially focusing on the quality of instruction and teachers' values, attitudes and beliefs within my conceptual framework. This study intends to answer the main research question: How do teachers in secondary schools in Bangladesh understand inclusion? In this connection, understanding is seen as an

inseparable and interconnected outcome of practices, attitudes and beliefs, and knowledge of teachers. The research used a phenomenological research design consisting of participant interviews and observations. An additional questionnaire was used to measure teacher attitudes and understanding of teaching strategies. A total of 12 interviews (two for each participant classroom teacher) and 12 observations (two of each participant) were conducted.

This thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter 1 is an introductory chapter based on an extensive review of the literature. Chapter 2 describes the study methodologies, chapter 3 presents the analysis and significant findings and chapter 4 contains the discussion, draws recommendations and explores the implications of the findings.

The study explores valuable information to identify the existing inclusive practice at the secondary level in Bangladesh. Respondents stated the need for and potential benefits of inclusive education practice, because inclusive education was supporting collaboration among students with and without disabilities and fostering academic achievements. Teachers encountered enormous challenges in practicing inclusive education due to their inadequate knowledge and limited professional development scopes. The barriers for teachers within inclusive education practice are likely the result of their beliefs and experiences in relation to students with disabilities and professional support. Positive attitudes toward appropriate teaching and learning for students with disabilities could improve the situation. Unfamiliarity with local

disability legalisation of teachers is likely to limit the opportunity for students with disabilities to gain access to what is rightfully theirs. Teachers identified that success within their practice is largely depending on their strategies for managing large class sizes and coping with excessive class load. Modification of existing assessment and evaluation system was also revealed as an option to better embrace inclusive education.

Participants found that student-centric evidence-based teaching and learning strategies are more effective than their traditional lecture-based teaching and learning practices in supporting inclusive education. Teachers' discomfort in dealing with students with hidden disabilities in terms of learning and behavioural difficulties portrayed negative aspects of inclusive education practice in Bangladesh. In such a situation, empowering teachers in the classroom may be helpful in order to construct inclusive pedagogy.

Finally, the findings of the research will support policy makers and other researchers learn about the constraints, opportunities and choices for possible future changes in inclusive education policy and practice in developing countries such as Bangladesh. Moreover, the research will contribute to wider national and international debates around inclusive education.

Glossary

Class VI. The first grade of existing secondary education of Bangladesh which comprises three tiers such as Junior Secondary (from Class VI to VIII), Secondary (Class IX to X), and Higher Secondary (Class XI and XII). However, this system is about to be reviewed after the new education policy 2010 was approved by the Bangladesh parliament. Successful student who successfully complete a public examination and graduate with a Primary School Certificate, are eligible to enrol at class six. The age range of students in Class VI is 11+.

Developmental Verbal Dyspraxia. A neurological disorder, it involves motor planning throughout the body when the brain is unable to communicate directions to the muscles. With no obvious physical indications, it has been referred to as the hidden disability (Stansell, 2007).

Hearing Impaired. Disability Welfare Act 2001 of Bangladesh (Act no 12 of 2001) defined hearing impairment as one's loss of "hearing capacity in the better ear in the conversation range of frequencies at 40 decibels (hearing unit) or more, or damaged or ineffective hearing" [Ministry of Social Welfare, 2001, Section 3(2) (C)].

Hidden Disability. A disability that may involve no observable problem, but students may experience difficulty understanding classroom lessons.

Intellectual Disabilities. The Disability Welfare Act 2001 defined “mental [intellectual] disability” as - one whose mental development is not at par with his/her “chronological age or whose IQ (Intelligent Quotient) is far below the normal range; or has lost mental balance or is damaged, partly or wholly” [Ministry of Social Welfare, 2001, Section 3(2)(A)].

Madrasah Education System. A traditional religious-based education system that parallels the general education system in Bangladesh. There are two types of Madrasah education: Alia Madrasahs and Qawmi Madrasahs. Alia Madrasahs combines the religious education and modern general education. The establishment of these Madrasahs, the appointment of teachers, and the curriculum development all follow government regulations as mandated by the Madrasah Education Board. On the other hand, the Qawmi is not recognised by the government. Both of the systems have their own equivalent ties to general education such as primary, secondary and higher education.

Mainstream. Refers to the formal schooling of the general Bangladesh education system where children with disabilities are placed and need to follow the regular curriculum.

Physically Handicapped. According to the Disability Welfare Act 2001 of Bangladesh (Act no 12 of 2001), physically handicapped refers to a person who has one of the following conditions. These are: “lost either one or both the hands; lost sensation, partly or wholly, of either hand, or it is so weaker in normal condition ; lost either one or both the feet; lost sensation, partly or

wholly, of either or both the feet, or it is so weaker in normal condition; has physical deformity and abnormality; or has permanently lost physical equilibrium owing to neuro-disequilibrium” [Ministry of Social Welfare, 2001, Section 3(2) (B)].

Students with Disabilities. According to the Disability Welfare Act 2001 of Bangladesh (Act no 12 of 2001), “Disability” means any person who is physically disabled either congenitally or as result of disease or being a victim of an accident, or due to improper or maltreatment or for any other reasons became physically incapacitated or mentally imbalanced, and as a result of such disability or cognitive impairment,- has become incapacitated, either partially or fully” [Ministry of Social Welfare, 2001, Section 3(1)].

School Based Assessment (SBA). SBA is a process for assessing the continuously progress of students learning by the classroom teachers. According to the Ministry of Education Directives in Bangladesh, thirty percent of total marks of a subject in secondary level (from grade VI to IX) are for SBA course work. Therefore $SBA = AFL + AOL$ (AFL denotes Assessment for learning and AOL stands for assessment of learning). SBA consists of three components in assessment; these are a) Coursework, b) Individual Development and c) Terminal and Final Examinations.

School Managing Committee (SMC). The committee is empowered for governing the non government recognised secondary schools in Bangladesh. According to the Section 39 of the Intermediate and Secondary Education Act

1961 (E.P.Ord.No.XXXIII of 1961), the school managing committee is formed and supervised with the regulations of the Boards of Secondary and Higher Education of Bangladesh. SMC consists of 13 elected members.

Speech Impairment. Disability Welfare Act 2001 of Bangladesh (Act no 12 of 2001) refers “loss of one’s capacity to utter/ pronounce meaningful vocabulary sounds, or damaged, partly or wholly, or dysfunctional” [Ministry of Social Welfare, 2001, Section 3(2)(D)].

Visual Impaired. The Disability Welfare Act 2001 of Bangladesh (Act no 12 of 2001) refers visual impaired to any person who has any of the following conditions: “No vision in any single eye; or in both the eyes; or visual acuity not exceeding 6/60 or 20/200 (Snellen) in the better eye even with correcting lenses; or limitation of the ‘field of vision’ subtending an angle of 20° (degree) or worse” Ministry of Social Welfare, 2001, Section 3(2) (A)].

Multiple Disabilities. One who suffers from more than one type of disability. For example, a student who may be deaf and blind together with having physical disabilities.

Acronyms

AAB	:	Action Aid Bangladesh
ABC	:	The Assessment of Basic Competency
ATIES	:	Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale
B.Ed	:	Bachelor of Education
BD	:	Bangladesh
CBR	:	Community Based Rehabilitation
CPD	:	Continuous Professional Development
CRC	:	Child Rights Convention
CRPD	:	Convention on the Rights of Peoples with Disabilities
CSID	:	Centre for Services and Information on Disabilities
CSIE	:	Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education
DG	:	Director General
DPE	:	Department of Primary Education
DSHE	:	Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education
DSS	:	Directorate of Social Service
DVD	:	Developmental Verbal Dyspraxia
EFA	:	Education for All
ERHEC	:	Educational Research Human Ethics Committee
GoB	:	Government of Bangladesh
HI	:	Hearing Impaired
ID	:	Intellectual Disabled
IDEA	:	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	:	Individualised Educational Plan
IQ	:	Intelligent Questionnaire
MDG	:	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	:	Ministry of Education
NGOs	:	Non-Government Organisations
NZ	:	New Zealand
PD	:	Physical Disabled
PEDP-II	:	Primary Education Development Program -II
PTA	:	Parent Teacher Association

SWD	:	Student with Disabilities
RTLB	:	Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour
SACIE	:	Sentiments, Attitudes and Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale
SBA	:	School Based Assessment
SCEMRB	:	Society for the Care and Education of the Mentally Retarded
SMC	:	School Management Committee
T-L	:	Teaching-Learning
TQI	:	Teaching Quality Improvement
TQI-SEP	:	Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project
UN	:	United Nations
UNESCO	:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	:	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	:	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
VI	:	Visually Impaired

Chapter 1

Introduction

1. 1 Introduction

Inclusive education is the most common approach to address the educational needs of all children (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Miles & Singal, 2010; Mitchell, 2009; Pathy, 2010; Ruijs, Van der Veen & Peetsma, 2010). According to Idol (2006), inclusion means that students with special needs attend general school programmes and are enrolled in age-appropriate classes for 100% of their schooling. Inclusion is a widely accepted phenomenon according to UNESCO (2005) for two reasons: firstly, education is a right that is part and parcel of modern society. Inclusion can foster democratic values (Engelbrecht, 2006; Ferguson, 1995; García-Huidobro & Corvalán, 2009) in the pursuit of social justice (Artiles, Harris-Murri & Rostenberg, 2006; Gerrard, 1994; Moberg & Savolainen, 2003; Slee, 2001). Secondly, it is a feasible option, and an integral part of the principles of equality of opportunity in education (Mitchell, 2010). Recent studies show that inclusive education provides the best opportunities to support the development for people with disabilities (Thomas & Loxley, 2001).

Inclusion is an educational philosophy that emphasises the rights of all children to attend their local school and is common throughout the

western world. Inclusion is a comparatively newer concept in developing countries such as Bangladesh. Research is yet to clearly record the outcomes of inclusive education on the quality of life of students with disabilities (Hornby, 1999). Moreover, Lindsay (2003) recognised the needs of research in inclusive education to inform policy and practice. In this respect, the purpose of this research is to throw light on teachers' practices supporting inclusive education. It is predicted that the greater the skills that teachers have in dealing with students with disabilities, the more effective their teaching (Angelides, 2008) which will have significant implications for the ultimate quality of life for their students.

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand and describe the inclusive education practice for children with disabilities in secondary schools in Bangladesh. At this stage in this research, the central phenomenon which is the *inclusive education practice* will be generally defined as the practice where:

The lessons correspond to the diversity of students, all students have access to them, teachers plan, teach and assess their lessons in collaboration, teachers are interested and support the participation and learning of all students, parents and the community are used as a source of support in the classroom. (Angelides, Georgiou & Kyriakou, 2008, p.558)

Indeed, phenomenological studies report the meaning for several individuals of their lived experience of a concept or a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Van Manen (1990) stated, “We adopt a phenomenological perspective in order to help us to bring to light that which presents itself as pedagogy in our lives with children” (p.44). For these reasons, the researcher intends to undertake a phenomenological study.

Sometimes inclusive education is explicit: with educators arguing for or against it. For others it is implicit: educators manifest interest or lack of interest. It is clear that the educators realise their engagement in swaying others or are being convinced by them about inclusion in education as well as in policy. In this manner, inclusive education has become a tremendously powerful means to address education for the disadvantaged. That is why policy makers all over the world yearn for inclusive education as a general strategy for addressing the needs of students with disabilities. Concerned with recompense as it is, inclusion gives remarkable social force a purpose. It is for promoting good and justice and checking inequality and prejudice laying in the education system. That is the essence of education for all, and the United Nations (UN) declares it as the defining mission for today’s education: “...considering the fundamental policy shifts required to promote the approach of inclusive education, namely enabling schools to serve all

children, particularly those with special educational needs” (UNESCO,1994, p.iii).

Teachers encompass a pivotal part to the success of inclusive educational practices (Macfarlane, 2007). They need not only the required skills and knowledge to implement inclusive education successfully but also need to have a positive attitude towards inclusion in their classrooms , because, the teacher’s attitude is highly pertinent to manage these students (Macfarlane, 2007). To determine the intervention strategies for teachers, their practice needs to be evaluated. A recent study researching teachers’ practice from the light of socio-cultural theory showed that teachers’ positive attitudes and reflection have a direct link with the success of inclusion (Moen, 2008). Several researchers focus on teachers’ attitudes related to inclusion. In a study in India (similar to the Bangladeshi context), Sharma, Moore, and Sonawane (2009) investigated the attitudes and concerns of 480 pre-service teachers enrolled in the Bachelor of Education program. They reported that these teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion were somewhat negative. However, studies have shown that the attitude of general education teachers was one of the most influential factors for successfully integrating students with disabilities into the regular classroom (Sze, 2009).

Ferguson (2008) noted that inclusive practice is not easy because it attempts to make learning available “to everybody, everywhere and all

the time” (p.109). Inclusive practice is needed for teachers to be responsive to all learners. The success of inclusive education depends on the ability of teachers to facilitate a good learning environment and also how effective teachers are in ensuring that their teaching caters for everyone (Flem, Moen & Gudmundsdottir, 2004). This research helps teachers understand what constitutes acceptable inclusive practice and will enable them to explore key themes and issues regarding inclusive practice.

A teacher’s perspective of inclusive practice differs from developed to developing countries. For example, the teachers in developing countries view inclusion as problematic due to lack of appropriate support and resources. A study into 1350 Zambian teachers [teachers in a developing country] and parents, and 512 Finnish teachers [teachers in a developed country] investigated inclusive education and the perceived best placement for children with different disabilities (Moberg & Savolainen, 2003). The pursuit of inclusion in practice, especially the guarantee of good and effective education for all, was seen as problematic by the Zambian teachers. These teachers preferred a more segregated educational environment for children with different disabilities. This contrasted with the Finnish teachers who were in favour of full inclusion. Considering these differences, the current study will contribute research

evidence to enable educators to have a better understanding of inclusive practice from a Third world perspective.

Teachers' difficulties in responding to inclusive environments of teaching and learning for providing equal opportunities of learning make inclusive education questionable in some respect. Research shows that developing inclusive practice is challenging for teachers (Angelides, Georgiou & Kyriakou, 2008), and especially enormous for early year teachers (Petriwskyj, 2010). Flem, Moen and Gudmundsdottir (2004) report that creating a positive atmosphere and having good academic insights about how teachers can foster inclusive practice is vital. Thomas, Walker and Webb (2005) argue inclusion as "an international descriptor of a particular marriage of ethos and practice" (p.22). To understand such ethos, we need to focus on teaching-learning practice. Throughout the process, the research concentrates on answering the question of how teachers could improve their educational practice to embrace diversity in inclusive settings, and how teachers perceive inclusive education. As a result, the study will explore teachers' understanding of existing inclusive educational practices. Giving voice to teachers and parents regarding inclusive practice would be noteworthy in this respect.

1.2 Background and Context

The Bangladeshi context has been considered for this research. In Bangladesh, inclusive education is like a noun compared to the New Zealand use of the term as a verb. Including all children with disabilities in to schools, especially into the mainstream is a priority, rather than to ensure quality of instruction. If quantity could be achieved, quality will increase. This is why I wish to examine teachers' perspectives (central phenomenon) of inclusive education. What are the values, belief, attitudes and how do they (teachers) understand inclusion and what are they doing in practice, and how do the parents of children with disabilities perceive these teachers' action for their children? There is no such research to support Bangladesh perspectives.

At present, the population of Bangladesh is approximately 164.4 million (UNFPA, 2010) with around 10% who are disabled in some way (Ahsan & Burnip, 2007), but the World Health Survey showed the disability prevalence at 31.9% for Bangladesh during the period 2002–2004 (World Health Organisation & The World Bank, 2011). The school age population is about 16.39 million with an overall enrolment rate of 91% (Government of Bangladesh [GoB], 2009). Many Bangladesh children with disabilities experience no education with up to 89% of these children not enrolled in schools (Directorate of Primary Education [DPE] & Centre for Services and Information on Disabilities [CSID], 2002).

Research indicates that most children with disabilities want to participate in education. However, a mere 11% of these children have so far gained access to education (DPE & CSID, 2002). The vast majority of children with disabilities do not attend school and a large percentage of children who do attend mainstream schools often drop out due to inaccessible school infrastructures and unpleasant school environments (CSID, 2002), including non-inclusive teaching practice. In this context, a burning question for educators in Bangladesh is how can this large number of children be included in the education system?

1.2.1 Evolution of Education Provision for Pupils with Disabilities in Bangladesh

Historically, disability in Bangladesh has been treated as a welfare or charity issue for a long time. Nevertheless, over the last few decades, disability has been become recognised as a wider societal concern (CSID & AAB, 2002). Policymakers and educators are currently looking to implement systematic intervention to address the educational needs of children with disabilities in Bangladesh from the ‘rights-based’ perspective. However, negative attitudes and practices reinforced by poverty create barriers that result in exclusion of people with disabilities from participating in mainstream experiences (CSID & AAB, 2002). In this context, the vast majority of children with disabilities never attend school and a large percentage of children who do attend mainstream

schools often drop out due to inaccessible school infrastructures and unpleasant school environments (CSID, 2002a).

The understanding and practice of inclusive education in Bangladesh is not as advanced as many other nations (CSID, 2002a). To value inclusive practices, there is a need to understand how special education has evolved over time. Special schooling started in the early 19th century, and systematic integration was introduced after the independence of Bangladesh in 1971. In the 1990s, education for children with disabilities moved towards a community based rehabilitation (CBR) model. Since the late 1990s, inclusive education has been systematically introduced across Bangladesh.

The history of disability-rights in Bangladesh goes back to the 12th century during Muslim rule. At that time people with hearing and speech impairments had legal rights in the areas of bequests, marriage, divorce and financial transactions (Ahmed, 2009). In 1914, during British colonial rule, the first School for the hearing impaired was established under the name ‘Lalbagh Deaf-Mute School’ (Ahmed, 2009) in Dhaka. Formal special education for people with visual impairments was introduced in the 1960s. Four schools were established by the Government in 1962 (Directorate of Social Service [DSS], n.d). Established in 1918 at Kurseong, West Bengal, ‘The Children’s House’ was the first special school for children who were intellectually and

physically disabled, not only in Bengal but also in India (Miles, 1996). After the emergence of independence in 1971, formal education services for people with intellectual disability commenced when the Society for the Care and Education of the Mentally Retarded (SCEMRB) was formed (Miles, 1996). This was a non-governmental organisation run by the parents of children with intellectual disabilities, psychologists, and social workers. In 1978, a special class located on the grounds of an ordinary school was established for children with intellectual disabilities in Dhaka. Gradually, integrated education followed by home-based services which were offered under a Community Based Rehabilitation programme (CBR) established by Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) took their place in the education system of Bangladesh inclusion education and was finally incorporated into the education system of Bangladesh in the late 1990s.

Globally, inclusive education has its origins in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the World Conference on Education for All (1990), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). These commitments were further reaffirmed in the UNESCO-organised conference in Salamanca, Spain (1994) by the endorsement of the Framework of Action on Special Education and the Dakar Framework for Action 2000. Besides the United Nations (UN) initiatives, the United States made a remarkable contribution to the field of inclusive education. The concept of the least restrictive environment was introduced with the

All Handicapped Children Act [the US] of 1975 (PL 94-142) and further clarification appeared through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The IDEA act was passed in 1990 and renewed in 1997 and 2004, providing the first legal basis for inclusion.

Being influenced by the above legislation, Bangladesh has incorporated inclusion into its primary education programme to include all children with disabilities, from mild to moderate degrees, from the beginning of the twenty-first century under a multi donor supported primary education development program (PEDP-II) (Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, 2007). A Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP) project also facilitated inclusion at the secondary level. Various declarations, policies and laws as well as constitutional statements are the basis of inclusive education in Bangladesh (Ahsan & Burnip, 2007). The Disability Welfare Act of 2001 (Ministry of Social Welfare, 2001) has created provision for children with disabilities to receive education in the regular classroom alongside their peers. The National Education Policy of 2010 (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2010) also emphasised the need for inclusive education for children with disabilities in Bangladesh.

1.2.2 The Existing Provision of Education for Children with Disabilities in Bangladesh

Evaluating the existing educational options for children with disabilities in Bangladesh, four different types of educational models can be

identified: special education programs; causal integrated education programs; mainstream education; and home-based education programs. There is minimal opportunity for persons with disabilities to attend special schools. Table 1 shows that there are only 13 public institutions with the capacity for 610 students with all types of disabilities in Bangladesh (Directorate of Social Services [DSS], n.d), whereas the total number of school age children with disabilities is estimated at 1.6 million.

Table 1

Public special education facilities for children with disabilities in Bangladesh

Types of disability	Total no. of schools	Seat/capacity
Hearing Impairment	07	270
Visual Impairment	05	240
Intellectual Disability	01	100
Total	13	610

Additionally, the DSS runs the integrated education programme for the visually impaired children with a view to provide education alongside students who do not have visual problems. Under this programme, 64 units have been set up in 64 selected mainstream secondary schools in 64 districts, consisting of 640 seats. However, what is interesting to note is that all of the schools are located at the divisional or city centres of Bangladesh and are managed by DSS and not the Ministry of Education

(MoE). All teachers and other staff are recruited and trained by the DSS rather than the MoE. People living in rural areas are unlikely to have access to these services. These schools also provide vocational training to help students prepare for and locate work. There are a few NGOs that provide special education services, but these are highly expensive to manage. Unfortunately, special education services are found to be lacking, and this forces parents to enrol their children in a mainstream school. Research shows that among students with disabilities enrolled in primary schools, 48% were in formal education, 23% were in integrated schools, and only 15% were in special education (DPE & CSID, 2002). Besides these models, home-based education is the default option that depends completely on the provision of services from the parents and other family members.

Inclusive education is creating new possibilities in education for children with disabilities not only in Bangladesh, but also all over the world. Snow (1998) called today's world as with vibrant new culture as the culture of inclusion. According to her views, this new culture values every human as gifted, whose presence in the community is something special, even though the presences of each person are different, with different potentialities (Snow, 1998). To implement inclusion in a school, it needs a combined effort in the community, from parents to teachers, personnel to policymakers and administrators. On the micro level,

relationships and functional interaction between students with and without disabilities is desirable, as the National Poet of Bangladesh, Kazi Nazrul Islam (1899-1976) invites, “Come Brother Hindu! Come Musalman (Muslims)! Come Buddhist! Come Christian! Let us transcend all barriers, let us forsake forever all smallness, all lies, all selfishness and let us call brothers as brothers’ (Poem ‘*Manus*’ [trans. as Human]).

1.2.3 Analysing the Context

Kibria (2005) points out that 90% of children with disabilities in Bangladesh experience disabilities that are mild to moderate in nature, and could easily benefit from inclusive education. Research shows inadequate teachers’ preparation programs act as a barrier to implementing inclusive education (Ahsan & Burnip, 2007). That is why many schools are not open to the idea of education for children with disabilities; and even if a few are normally included they encounter negative treatment where their peers are not sensitive to disability issues, and their teachers have no training (CSID, 2002a). An ethnographic quantitative study of 120 Street Children with Disabilities in Dhaka city reports that “most of the children suffer from frustration and have an inferiority complex because of their limitations as an effect of their disability. There is an attitude of neglect for their schooling” (Anam, Bari, & Alam, 1999, p.26).

Recently secondary education in Bangladesh has been moving towards the philosophy of full inclusion by the influence of the UNESCO *Declaration on Education For All* (UNESCO,1990), the *Dakar Framework* (UNESCO,2000) and the *Salamanca Declaration on Inclusive Education* (UNESCO,1994), the *Child Right Convention* (UNICEF, 1989), and the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (UN, 2006), all of which advocate and impose legal as well as ethical obligations for implementing full inclusion for all children with disabilities. My interest is to understand how complex or complicated inclusive practices are in a country like Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh education system has set a goal of education for all by the year 2015. As a result, inclusive education has been featured as the means of achieving the goal. Persons with disabilities are doubly disadvantaged in developing countries: victims of both poverty and disability (CSID, 2002). In education, people with disabilities tend to have been excluded from learning institutions (CSID, 2002). To ensure education for all, this portion of the population needs to be accepted into the education system. Very little research has been conducted on how to provide effective education for children with disabilities, but no research exists yet about inclusive school practices in Bangladesh. How will mainstream children—and their parents -embrace inclusion in schools?

What inclusive practice actually looks like at the secondary level has not yet been investigated by research.

From the beginning of twenty-first century, Bangladesh has incorporated inclusive education in primary education to include children with mild to moderate disabilities. To evaluate the basic education for children applying 'The Assessment of Basic Competency (ABC)' methodology, Chowdhury, Nath and Choudhury (2003) report that primary education in Bangladesh has gained tremendous equity in recent years. Gender disparity and the urban-rural gap have been eliminated, but disparity is lying in terms of academic achievement. One possible cause may be the teaching practices within schools.

The challenges of improving inclusive education practices at secondary school in Bangladesh are enormous. Characterising secondary level teaching in Bangladesh, Ruitenberg (2009) identified the tension between the constraints related to teaching and learning and those related to contextual and political issues. The teacher's safety and security are often threatened by political pressure, which affect their own practices and commitment correspondingly. Thornton (2006) reports that a collaborative culture among teachers has not yet developed within the secondary schools in Bangladesh. Contextual factors such as the rigid curriculum, the low ability of many students, and the teachers' own educational background act additionally to hinder a collaborative culture

emerging. All of these factors have a de-motivating effect on many teachers' practices. A typical issue portrayed in Ruitenberg's study (2009) was that secondary school teachers in Bangladesh discuss among themselves the low ability of the students. The tendency here is for teachers to blame the students or parents for 'being illiterate' rather than such a result being a prompt for them to examine their own teaching practice and how they could not respond adequately to the learning needs for those students. However, it has to be noted that the government policy clearly indicates that teachers are responsible for low student achievement. National education policies and the Disability Welfare Act of 2001 (Ministry of Social Welfare, 2001) created provisions for children with disabilities to receive education in the same classroom as their peers who do not have disabilities.

The Bangladesh 1997 Education Policy suggests that the provision for integrated education along with special education provisions depend on the needs of the children concerned (MoE, 1997). In contrast, the National Education policies produced by the Ministry of Education (MoE [Bangladesh], 2000; 2010) emphasise the establishment of inclusive education as much as possible. The concept of including children with special needs into mainstream education classrooms received official recognition in 2000 (MoE [Bangladesh], 2000). In the 1990s Bangladesh enacted the 'Compulsory Primary Education Act' to ensure primary

schooling for all. However, most children with disabilities were excluded from taking up this option due to the poor state of the infrastructure of the schools. For example, physical access was limited (Ahsan & Burnip, 2007). Bangladesh then enacted the Disability Welfare Act in 2001 which provided legislative support to ensure that access to education for children with disabilities was adequate. Part D of this Act discusses the educational rights of people with disabilities and proposed to:

- create opportunities for free education for all children below 18 years of age with disabilities;
- provide them with educational materials free of cost or at a low cost;
- create opportunities for the integration of students with disabilities in regular schools (Ministry of Social Welfare, 2001).

In line with article 17 of the constitution and also with the above legislation, it becomes the responsibility of the state of Bangladesh to establish a uniform and universal system of education to ensure that education fulfils the needs of society and promotes values such as patriotism and humanism (MoE, 1974). There is also an undeniable urge to compete in a global world without losing sight of the virtues of compassion and caring (MoE, 2010).

The conceptual barrier makes the inclusive education initiatives questionable in Bangladesh. Bangladesh remains a land of contradictions regarding education for people with disabilities. The scopes of special schooling are limited in the country, and are managed by the Directorate of Social Services under Ministry of Social Welfare. All of the special schools are located in the divisional city centres and the rural people are not able to reach this service. There are a few Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) which provide special education services, but these are highly expensive to provide. Research shows that among the primary enrolled children with disabilities, 48% were in formal education, 23% were in integrated schools, and 15% were in special education (DPE & CSID, 2002). Conflicting inter-ministerial policies are also affecting the country's inclusive practice. The Ministry of Education is in favour of inclusion but the controlling ministry, the Ministry of Social Welfare is still looking for a mixed approach, even though Bangladesh has ratified the 'Convention on Rights of Peoples with Disabilities (CRPD) with its optional protocol (UN, 2006). At a standstill, education for the children with disabilities in Bangladesh is seen as a welfare issue controlled by the DSS. There is a little support for the student in terms of 'Disability Education Allowances' (DSS, 2008), but no set grant or support for schools like New Zealand's Special Education grant and also no school-based support programme like RTLB, Counsellors, or speech-language therapy. Article no. 8.1.6 of the

National Social Welfare Policy of 2006 of Bangladesh recommends mixed approaches for special education, and advocates for establishing new special institutions for the inclusion of people with disabilities (Ministry of Social Welfare, 2005).

The new challenge of inclusion is to create schools in which our day-to-day efforts no longer assume that a particular text, activity, or teaching mode will "work" to support any particular student's learning (Ferguson, 1995). General school facilities do not as adequately cover the needs of learners with disabilities as special and integrated setups; especially for children with significant levels of disability. There is no such policy guideline that addresses the varying needs of disabled children in mainstream education, which results in the lack of proper care services.

Given that the regular education system is fighting a number of problems, teachers may think that inclusive initiative may increase these. Gomes (2009) listed a number of chronic factors affecting the Bangladesh education sector. These include:

- the poor quality of education policy and content;
- concerns with the relevance of the curriculum;
- the poor quality of teachers;
- a lack of quality teachers' training and teaching methods;
- poor school buildings and safety;

- accountability issues;
- effective local and national assessment tools;
- inadequate research funds and institutions;
- lack of quality educational leaders;
- lack of partnership with stakeholders.

Inclusive education is facing a great challenge within the Bangladesh education system. Kibria (2005) identified seven general barriers towards inclusive education in Bangladesh. These are:

- negative attitude of people;
- invisibility in the community;
- cost;
- physical access;
- class size;
- lack of trained teachers;
- gender discrimination;
- Identification problems.

Technology plays a vital role in inclusion. A study shows that most of the parents and teachers in Bangladesh were unaware about using technology (Rahaman, 2008). Ahsan and Burnip (2007) identified that a lack of resources (such as funding, teaching/educational materials, training opportunities) is the main barrier towards inclusive education for

Bangladesh. This is in spite of the fact that Bangladesh has enacted laws to safeguard the educational rights and welfare of children with disabilities, and is really trying to initiate inclusive classrooms in the regular education system.

On the basis of the above discussion, it could be said that teachers are very vital to achieving the goal of inclusion for education of persons with disabilities in the twenty-first century. Mainstream education will open the doorway to education for a number of children with disabilities, and at the same time, the special education system will ensure the learning needs of children with profound disabilities. Moreover, inclusive education could be treated as social/affective education for all. With the academic learning, inclusion provides a unique opportunity to instil the values of humanity to our children (Epstein & Elias, 1996). As a result, systematic inclusion demands an all out reform within the entire public education system of Bangladesh, because, “public education is like a Web: each strand touches many others, depending upon as well as providing support for the entire structure” (Ferguson, 1995, p.286). Reforms are needed to avoid the contradiction in the existing policies related to education and disabilities in Bangladesh.

In this respect, introducing effective inclusive education in secondary schools demand the systematic investigation of education, especially on teaching practices. This study will contribute to a better understanding of

teachers and their development of inclusive practices. My thesis is on the current teaching practices at the secondary level within Bangladesh for students with disabilities that are now at odds with the nation's constitutional intent with respect to equity for all within society. The study will be helpful to identify gaps between policies, theory and inclusive practice. Moreover, the study will explore invaluable information to develop our understanding of inclusive practices in secondary schools of Bangladesh.

1.3 Conceptual Framework

Theories serve to justify the practice and practice, in turn, informs theory (Macfarlane, 2007). Usually, a functional theory could enhance a practitioner's ability to work with others and also generate a range of ethical and educational logical solutions to educational problems (Macfarlane, 2007). Hence, theory performs as an imperative for developing a teaching-learning curriculum as well as practice for children with disabilities. Thomas and Loxley (2001) point out,

...education should be guided more by the truths laid down by the great educators of yesteryear – Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Montessori – and continued in the twentieth century by the likes of John Dewey, Lev Vygotsky, John Holt and Frank Smith. It is to their simple truths about teaching, learning and thinking (rather

than to the theories and methods of psychologists or grand theoreticians) that we should look in constructing inclusion. (p.ix)

Many theorists have taken different angles on the conceptualisation of disability and education issues, but this study is underpinned by the social constructivist view of disability organised by the works of Lev Vygotsky (1896 –1934), “disabilities are constructed on the basis of interpretations made because of social values and beliefs” (Thomas & Loxley, 2001, p.3). Within this view, inclusive practice enables teachers to pursue appropriate strategies for learners. The underlying premise is that teachers are all experts in different ways, and that their different experiences and understandings are of value.

For having a better understanding on the theoretical base of academic achievement and disability, we need to identify the epistemologies that shape practices in, of and around inclusive education for pupil with disabilities. According to Barr and Smith (2008), we may consider curriculum as inquiry where learning is a matter of co-construction. This standpoint of learning and teaching is supported by the right-based model of disability. Under the schooling theory, pedagogical discourses could be helpful to understanding the academic issues around teaching pupils with disabilities. The discourses of inclusion interpret that if appropriate environment could be provided every child has equal potentialities to learn. According to Barr and Smith (2008), the right discourse of

disability is linked pedagogically with inclusion discourse. It establishes rights of pupils with disabilities in the society and the classroom.

On the basis of the above theoretical discussion, the following conceptual framework (fig.1) has been formed to understand inclusive practice, which is viewed from two levels: the Macro and Micro levels. The Macro level includes the broader perspective of inclusion practice focusing on the State position and the teacher training system. On the other hand, the Micro level concentrates on the school level focusing on classrooms, teachers and students. For the delimitation in terms of time and scopes, my research is located within the two components of the Micro level practice, especially pertaining to quality instruction and teacher values, attitudes and beliefs within my conceptual framework, even though all parts of the system are interconnected. For the essence of the research, it may overlap with other Micro level components as well Macro level components in some instances, as Van Manen (1990) suggests ‘balancing the researching context by considering parts and whole’ (p.31) for a phenomenological study.

To gain a pragmatic insight of inclusive education practice, we need to study inclusive values, inclusive policies, collaboration and inclusive assessment and teaching. According to the Ecological System Theory of Bronfenbrenner (2005), surrounding is important to understand children’s development and education. At the same time, the UNESCO’s (2001)

nine golden rules of inclusive education have particularly been considered to prepare the matrix and some related information and issues are adapted. The nine golden rules consist: including all pupils, communication, managing classrooms, lesson planning, individual plans, individual help, assistive aids, managing behaviour and working together. The study of Kuyini and Desai (2007) in Ghana showed that attitudes towards inclusion and knowledge of inclusion are directly linked with effective teaching practices in an inclusive setting. In this connection, the conceptual framework below (fig.1) was formed.

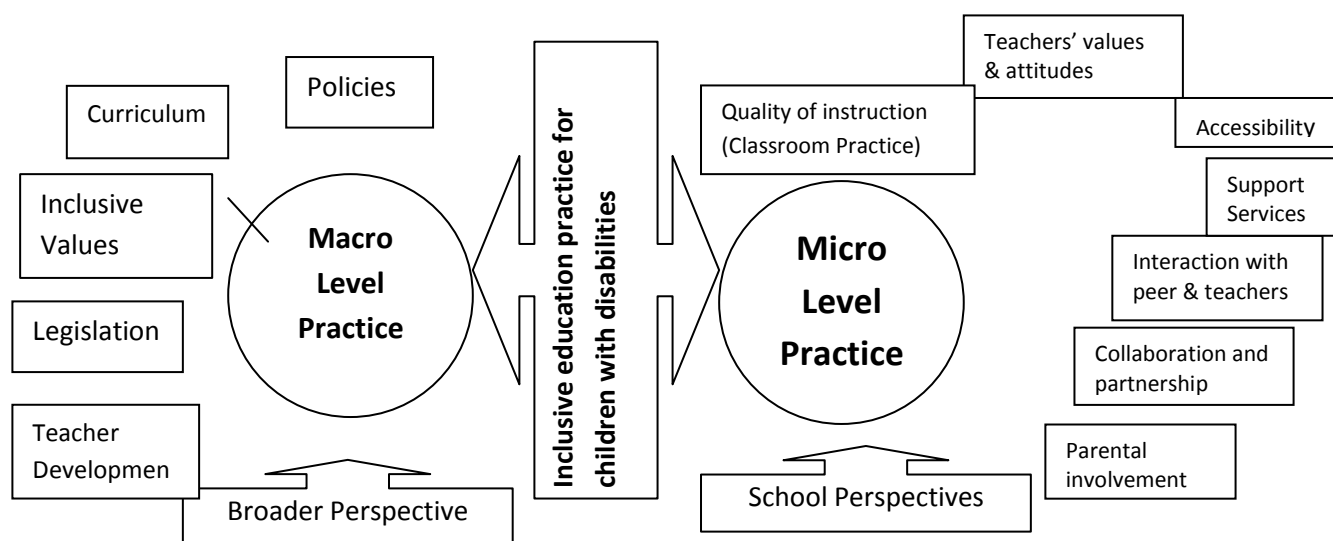


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of inclusive educational practice

This model recognises the diversity and considers the adoption of a constructive approach. If a teacher cannot realise the needs of children,

successful inclusion cannot take place. For example, Maddern (2009) identified the lack of understanding on the needs of children with visual impairment as one reason for the difficulties of including a student with visual impairment. Explaining the social model of disability, teachers need to engage critically with learners with disabilities (Macfarlane, 2007). Inclusion concerns from individual support to school wide support and also emphasises on community involvement (Lipsky & Gartner, 1999 cited in Macfarlane, 2007). For this reason, selecting appropriate teaching practices is needed to embrace inclusiveness (De Jong, 2005) as well as is selecting appropriate cultural contexts. How can the children with disabilities be included into schools? Or how can schools effectively manage these pupils? Considering these questions, the research attempts to come up with a comprehensive analysis of teacher practice. How inclusive education has been envisaged and called for by teachers, and how it is experienced and understood by teachers for pupils with disabilities, will be explained by the research.

1.4 Research Questions

To achieve the said objective, as described earlier, the following research question has been formulated to investigate inclusive education practice as a goal of education in Bangladesh. This study intends to find out the answer of the main research question:

How do teachers in secondary schools in Bangladesh understand inclusion?

Along with supplementary questions:

- a) To what extent is current educational practice inclusive within secondary schools in Bangladesh?
- b) What knowledge, beliefs and attitudes of teachers shape or otherwise of inclusive practices for children with disabilities in Bangladesh?

In order to study the research question, I formulated the following framework (fig-2) of the term “understanding” for practice from a series of discussions with my supervisors.

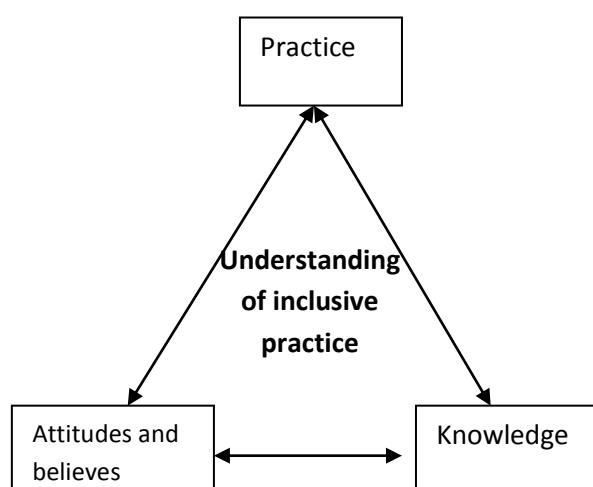


Figure 2. The meaning of understanding

In the questions, understanding is seen as an inseparable and interconnected outcome of practice, attitude and beliefs, and knowledge

of teachers. These research questions help me to guide the selection of research methods and techniques that were thought most appropriate to provide inside explanations by illuminating the data of the present research.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The research is significant in many ways. To ensure learning for all depends on the teachers, who first need to learn from the context, as Stansell (2007) said, “in order to effectively advocate for the child who struggles in the classroom, we must first educate ourselves about this often overlooked and misunderstood disability that affects a relatively large portion of the school population” (P.7) .

Teachers may face problematic situations in the classroom of a secondary school. They need to learn about hidden disabilities. This is because statistics show that about 15 percent of the U.S. population have a learning disability (Ketter, 2006). Teachers have to ensure progress even for the learning disabled children. Ketter (2006) defined learning disability as “disorders that affect an individual’s ability to understand or use spoken or written language, do mathematical calculations, coordinate movements, or direct attention” (p.34). Thus, teachers must be aware of the different learning disabilities and how they affect a person’s ability to

learn. But, to be able to assist individuals with disabilities with the learning process, teachers must have their own understanding.

Though teacher education is a Macro level component, it has great influence on micro level components such as teaching-learning practice. However, the existing arrangement for teacher education is considered inadequate in Bangladesh. Without the support from a sound teacher education, inclusion cannot be successful. The New Education Policy 2009 identified that the system of the existing inadequate teacher education in Bangladesh is itself a challenge. According to the commission report,

Existing teacher education is very traditional, in-complete, certificate based, more focused on theoretical knowledge rather practical, huge gap between theory and practice, encouraging rote learning and old paper-pencil test based system. (MoE, 2010, P.56)

A number of challenges arise from teacher training – how do teachers serve at secondary school with their prior knowledge? What do they do in their classroom to manage children's learning needs in an inclusive setting? The study would explore such opportunities to share teachers' experiences of inclusive practice.

The role of teachers in student success within an inclusive classroom is vital. The study investigates the factors contributing toward inclusive

success. What comprises student success in inclusive education or schools? Success has to be defined first in order to understand the dimension of inclusive education practice. However, success, which is a culturally relative phenomenon, can be defined as “mastering a curriculum and relating cultural heritage” (Melnechenko & Horsman, 1998, p.7), whereas the Eurocentric view of students’ success concentrates mainly on measuring academic achievement for having a better job in future (Melnechenko & Horsman, 1998).

There are two folds of factors related to students’ success in all settings of education, such as outside factors and inside factors (Melnechenko & Horsman, 1998). The outside factors (outside of school) include favourable government policies (Cavanagh, 2008), home-school connection, family support and encouragement (De Jong, 2005; Dorfman & Fisher, 2002; Melnechenko & Horsman, 1998), supportive peer interaction (Melnechenko & Horsman, 1998), and adequate family incomes (Melnechenko & Horsman, 1998), whereas the inside factors (within school & classroom) that can contribute to success are community involvement in the school (Cavanagh, 2008; De Jong, 2005; Dorfman & Fisher, 2002; Melnechenko & Horsman, 1998), positive student support system, culturally relevant curriculum (Dorfman & Fisher, 2002; Melnechenko & Horsman, 1998), accommodation of

different learning styles (diversity), and a learning environment that is responsive to the students.

Literature shows that student identified hard work, intelligence, being caring, being respectful, having a good job in future, not talking back to the teacher, and using modest language as the underlying drive for success (Melnechenko & Horsman, 1998). There is a socio-cultural influence on success, especially the influences of parent, community, and school that are considered to be enormous (Dorfman & Fisher, 2002). However, student behaviour has a direct link with their achievement in schools (De Jong, 2005). As a result teachers' have to know about the context of student behaviour, because students need to be able to deal with racism and prejudice (Melnechenko & Horsman, 1998). Finally, it is evident from '*Roosevelt High School*' that strong teaching, challenging curriculum and family involvement were crucial to students' success (see Dorfman & Fisher, 2002, p.27).

The study will look at the roles and characteristics of respondents as good teachers. How do their practices affect students' success? Research shows that teachers play a vital role in student success (Cavanagh, 2008, De Jong, 2005; Melnechenko & Horsman, 1998). Research shows that students' success is more dependent on the interpersonal skills of teachers, because, only teacher and student together comprise the community of learners in the classroom (Melnechenko & Horsman,

1998). Building healthy and mutual relationships with students (Cavanagh, 2008; Melnechenko & Horsman, 1998) and with families (Dorfman & Fisher, 2002) is crucial for teachers. In fact, positive relationships, particularly between student and teacher are critical for maximizing appropriate behaviour and achieving learning outcomes (De Jong, 2005). However, to master the methodology necessary to design lessons and implement the curriculum teachers must develop communicative techniques to establish a healthy relationship with students (Melnechenko & Horsman, 1998). For this reason, the selections of appropriate teaching practices need to embrace inclusiveness (De Jong, 2005) and appropriate cultural context (Melnechenko & Horsman, 1998).

In an inclusive setting, the involvement of family and parents is essential. Teachers should have a connection with the family. This connection would help him or her to reshape practices. Research has established a strong positive correlation between family involvement and students' academic achievement (Dorfman & Fisher, 2002; Melnechenko & Horsman, 1998). The teachers' relationship will help the students to get better interventions. However, several researches define family involvement in different ways. Researchers typically agree that "family involvement minimally includes parental engagement in learning activities at home, supervision of schools works, and initiating interaction with teachers and schools" (Dorfman & Fisher, 2002, p.10). Support and

encouragement in the form of affection and inspiration from family to student is important for success (Melnechenko & Horsman, 1998). A healthy home-school connection (Melnechenko & Horsman, 1998) is significant for having a cultural bonding (Cavanagh, 2008) in school.

Inclusive classroom practice can also be influenced by policy options for students' success. Education determines the quality of individual life, including peoples with disabilities and the future of a society as a whole. Effective education is directly linked to the building of a more dynamic economy, an efficient system of governance and democracy and an enlightened society (MoE, 2010). From here, people with disabilities are able to get benefits. Thus, the policy needs to reflect the inspiration of the consumers (Cavanagh, 2008). According to Cavanagh (2008), the task of education is to transmit ideas and values than facts. As a result, policy needs to be formulated on the basis of '*student-centred philosophy*' (De Jong, 2005, p.358), which recognises the student at the centre of the education process. That is why teachers need to follow student-centric approaches of teaching for students with disabilities. Teachers need to use evidence based practice to get maximum benefits for their pupils (Hornby, 1999; Mitchell, 2004), because effective pedagogy is central to the success of the student in school (De Jong, 2005).

Teaching children with disabilities in mainstream classroom is a reality. UNESCO (2008) policy points out that segregating children is the result

of fear and ignorance, perpetuating cycles of prejudice within a community. All children need such education to help them to develop relationships and prepare them for the future (Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education [CSIE], 2008). Within this ideological framework, inclusive education has the potential to reduce the previous educational disadvantages for children with disabilities (CSIE, 2008).

The study will explore the teachers' initiatives in terms of empowering the classroom. According to Chandler (1999), "by empowering our teachers, we empower ourselves" (p118). Effective teaching methods could have application in this regard. Stone (1995) identified that teachers gain the power to choose curriculum, create policy and make decisions concerning the school, if they are empowered. It is true that professional development courses allow teachers to recognise children who have problems (Pearn, 2011). Empirical evidence suggests that empowering promotes trust, collaborative learning and tolerance for ambiguity (Brunson & Vogt, 1996). In the case of inclusive education, teachers' practice is changed with the influence of empowerment philosophy. The process model of classroom empowerment (Brunson & Vogt, 1996; Vogt & Murrell, 1990) recognises empowerment as "synergistic and process-oriented" (Brunson & Vogt, p.74). Trust, communication and participation are the heart of classroom teaching according to the 'notion of congruency' (p.76) which grows students'

willingness to participate in constructive ways to learn. In case of children with disabilities, it brings about confidence, because empowerment enhances the individual's ownership. In fact, empowerment of the classroom enables people to produce their best product because it promotes personal responsibility and accountability for desired outcomes.

Deemer (2004) showed that teacher's beliefs about teaching and learning influence their instructional practices. The teacher's role to ensure students with disabilities to participate actively in the classroom is important for true inclusion. Teachers have a critical role in creating classroom environments that encourage students to become active, self-motivated learners (Deemer, 2004).

The beginning of a new millennium has seen many educators proclaim that the world has entered a new educational era. Inclusive education practice within school is vital to examine. Describing twenty-first century schools, Anne Shaw, the director of the twenty-first Century Education, comments that though we are technically in the twenty-first century, the schools are still not able to reach to the desired dimension yet. The main challenge remaining for the educators is to reinvent schools for the twenty-first century, for the sake of children, students and the welfare of the world. According to Shaw, "it [twenty-first century school] is bold, it breaks the mould. It is flexible, creative, challenging and complex"

(2009, p.11). Education in the new millennium has been ushered in within a dramatic technological revolution. In the twenty-first century, humans are now living in an increasingly diverse, globalised, complex and media-saturated society (Shaw, 2009). That is why the school also needs to be adjusted with the system of twenty-first century. The twenty-first century education is influenced by a new liberal policy that is predominately technology-based and directed towards societal needs. Inclusive schooling is a desirable phenomenon in this policy. The worldwide technological revolution (Janice & Julie, 2009) is facilitating inclusion for the children with disabilities in the mainstream education system. Within the movements of the twenty-first century, the study would also be able to identify the hidden transcript (Scott, 1997) of inclusive education in Bangladesh. It is perhaps true that the teachers of Bangladesh are not able to identify the real needs of their pupils, as Mahatma Gandhi said, “We are not aware of our real needs, and most of us improperly multiply our wants and thus unconsciously make thieves of ourselves” (Gandhi, 1997). From this perspective, the study would be significant to enable the teachers to know about their real needs in the inclusive setting.

Chapter 2

Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodological aspects of the current research. The chapter begins with a description of methodological differences and presents arguments for the methodological decisions made in the development of this study. In addition, this chapter includes information on the research design, scope of the study, selection of the participants, gaining access to the field, methods for data collection, organising, analysing and interpreting of data, aspects of validity, reliability, rigour and trustworthiness, and data triangulation. The chapter also includes consideration of the ethical issues involved in the study.

2.2 Methodological Decisions

We live in narrative's moment. The linguistic and textual basis of knowledge about society is now privileged. Everything we study is contained within a storied, or narrative, representation. The self itself is a narrative production. There is no dualism between self and society. (Lincoln & Denzin, 2003, p. 240)

Social research involves engagement with the world to find out the answers to the questions: "What is happening? Why is this happening?"

How does this affect people?” (Hall & Hall, 1996, p.11). Various methodologies are used to make connections with the world in order to find answers to complex questions. Within research studies investigating similar phenomena, different researchers may look at different things from different perspectives using different methodologies. Therefore, researchers need to be acquainted with the strengths and weaknesses of different methodologies and understand which approach might be best suited for their needs.

Different methodologies result in problems being interpreted in different ways within their underpinning philosophical and theoretical frameworks (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). According to Hara (1995), when researchers intend to observe details from their own viewpoints and look for depth and meaning, they use qualitative approaches to gain an in-depth understanding of the problem. Five general features of qualitative research identified by Bogdan and Taylor (1988) are: naturalistic, descriptive data, concern with process, inductive reasoning, and meaning. Thus, qualitative research methods emphasise why and how rather than just what, where, when of decision making. In fact, this study is concerned with developing meaning for depth of understanding of inclusive education practices within secondary schools in Bangladesh.

Selecting a qualitative methodological approach is aligned with my epistemological stance, which has developed from an interpretivist philosophy, “knowledge of the world is intentionally constituted through a person’s lived experience” (Weber, 2004, p.IV). Exploring existing practice, the actual reasons behind such practice and what constructed the situation with children with disabilities in inclusive practice, the study takes an interpretive stance through semi-structured interviews and observations. It was determined that a phenomenological approach would best fit with my research questions. Phenomenological research facilitates the study of experiences from the individual’s perspectives. According to Lester (1999), phenomenological approaches provide deep information and explain human perceptions through qualitative methods.

My current study is about teachers’ perceptions and perspectives. The goal of the phenomenological research is to clarify the specific actions, or explore the phenomena through “how they are perceived by the actors in a situation” (Lester, 1999, p.1). According to Vehmas (2010), a phenomenological approach is needed because:

Interaction between an individual and his or her environment is fundamentally a social phenomenon which implies that problems in that interaction cannot be understood simply in terms of an individual’s characteristics but, rather, in terms of social arrangements. Problems in academic proficiency or behaviour in

general cannot be reduced to individuals – society, and its institutions (e.g. school), are partly to blame as well. (p.87)

It is evident from previous qualitative studies that the phenomenological approach of investigation is effective to study similar problems in a different context. For example, Flem, Moen and Gudmundsdottir (2004) conducted their phenomenological study to understand successful inclusive practice of a long-serving practitioner teacher using observation, video recording, and interviews within a single case study design. What the teacher did in practice in order to be successful and foster the children's best development was the main theme of their research. As the goal of my research is similar but in a different context, I have chosen to undertake the research within the framework of a phenomenological approach.

2.3 Research Design

The current study utilised elements of a mixed method approach within a phenomenological research framework. This '*within-stage-mixed model design*' for the study enables the parallel use of both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies throughout various stages (Broussard, 2006; Lamm-Hanel & Hoppe-Graff, 2006). The current study utilised a questionnaire that included a summated rating scale (quantitative data

collection) and an interview based on open ended questions (qualitative data collection) (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Within the paradigm's philosophical standpoint, this design allows researchers to mix as well as to put equal emphasis on qualitative and quantitative traditions for taking methodological decision using a 'compatibility thesis' that supports "the five Cs of method use" (Yanchar & Williams, 2006, p.8), namely contextual sensitivity, creativity conceptual awareness, coherence, and critical reflection. Mixing some quantitative data does not necessarily mean a mixed methods design (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Here quantitative and qualitative methods are "complementary" (Hall & Hall.1996, p.45), not an integration of methods. The main reason behind introducing a quantitative questionnaire into my research was "to explore in more depth issues thrown up by such a survey" (p.45). It helped me to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon in terms of the attitude of the teachers and that would back the qualitative data. However, the world of educational research today is becoming "increasingly interdisciplinary, complex, and dynamic" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.15), demanding complementing one method with another. According to the research design, to portray the teachers understanding, challenges and potentialities towards the phenomenon, the following methodological framework (figure 3) for collecting data was introduced:

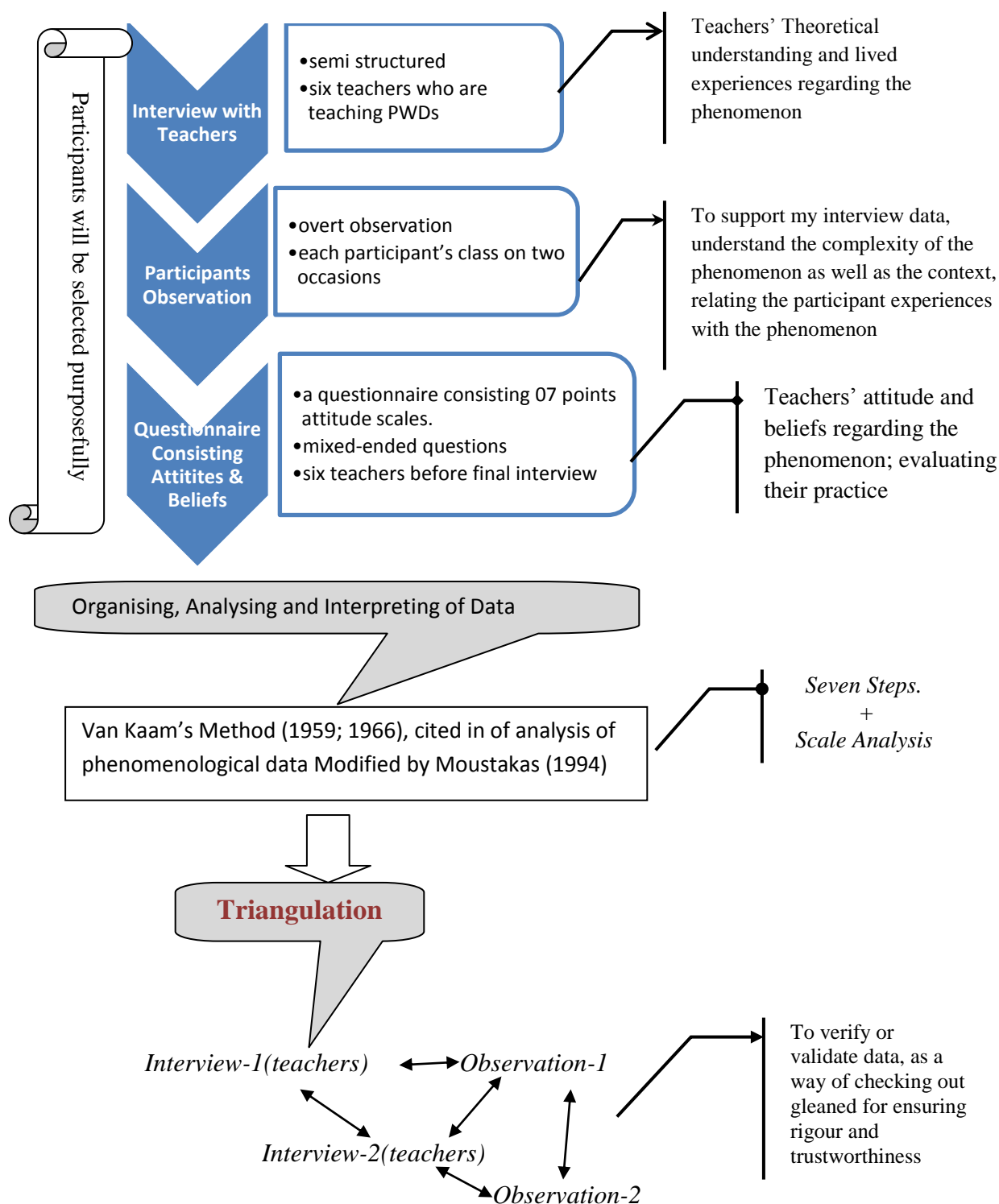


Figure 3. Methodological framework (at a glance).

Note. PWDs denotes Pupils with Disabilities

2.4 Methods for Data Collection

According to the phenomenological research design, interviews are the predominant method of data collection. I also undertook participant observations and distributed a questionnaire for collecting data.

2.4.1 Interview

According to Thompson (2009), “interviews are the central element of the data collection process in phenomenological research” (p.797). Moreover, an interview is the meaning making process of knowing other experiences (Seidman, 2006). Thus, it was felt that interviews would provide me with the best means to extract information from the participants (teachers) to understand their views and experiences, because “in an interview situation it is possible for an investigator to obtain in-depth information by probing” (Kumar, 2005, p.131). Hence, interviewing is the preferred method of data collection in a situation where in-depth information is required. According to the inclusive education practice framework (see figure 1), interviewing is the most relevant research method to explore in-depth information regarding the phenomenon.

I interviewed six teachers twice each in order to obtain information. According to Moustakas (1994), “phenomenological interview involves an informal, interactive process and utilises open-ended comments and

questions” (p.114). To support the research, a guideline comprising a series of questions/problems for exploring the participant’s experience of the phenomenon was developed. In the interview setting, I created a friendly atmosphere. For that reason, I sent the interview guidelines one week before the interview date. In order to obtain appropriate information about the phenomenon, I chose to carry out semi-structured interviews, because, “in-depth interviews use a less-structured approach which is sometimes referred to as semi-standardised or semi-structured” (Hall & Hall, 1996, p.157), where an interviewee could express more freely their opinions.

Interview 1(see appendix 1) was designed to be an introduction on the basic values and beliefs of the participants. This led to a foundation for the first observation. Interview 2 (see appendix 4) was designed to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon with a predefined guideline. The two interviews with the same participants would create the chance of negotiation regarding the phenomenon, as “the interview is a negotiated text” (Lincoln & Denzin, 2003, p.239).

2.4.2 Interview Schedules

The interview was conducted following pre-developed guidelines (see the appendices 1 and 4). Though phenomenological interviews were employed, pre-defined guidelines were used both for the Interviews 1 and 2. The guideline provided an appropriate framework from which to work.

The first guideline was more focused on the understanding of the participants towards inclusive education classroom practice. Interview 1 was important to build good rapport with the participants for the rest of the research work. The guideline for Interview 1 was divided into three sections. Section One was the introductory part, that included background information of the participants such as name, designation, gender, highest level of education, information on training received, professional experience, teachers' interactions with people with disabilities at an individual level, teaching experience with students with disabilities, level of confidence in teaching students with disabilities and finally understanding of the Disability Welfare Act [BD] of 2001.

Section Two focussed on participants' classroom experience with children with disabilities of their classes. This section incorporated the demography of disabled children in the class, history of their educational placement and enrolment in their school. Respondents were also asked to critically describe the academic conditions (progress, interest, interaction, difficulties, and acceptance) for the children with disabilities. Finally, teachers were asked to share their ideas on the barriers experienced by students with disabilities.

The final section of the Interview 1 guidelines contained more open-ended questions related to the main phenomenon of inclusive education practice. It contained four general questions on their thoughts about

inclusive education, their understanding and views on inclusive education, their strategies for putting inclusion into practice, and finally about the effectiveness of inclusive education for all students.

The interview schedule also included a second interview (Interview 2) with the participants. A separate guideline was prepared for this interview, being more complex and containing more open-ended questions. The guideline focused on children with disabilities in the classroom, academic activities, teaching-learning strategies and a few general areas of inclusive education practice. The interview started by describing a typical day with children with disabilities in the classroom. The Interview 2 guideline was divided into three sections.

Section One contains the history of enrolling students with disabilities, how they were included in the class, first feelings of the respondent in finding disabled students in their class, problems experienced due to students with disabilities, quality of life, teaching and learning activities, challenges to manage children with disabilities in the class, mechanisms for classroom problem-solving, support mechanism, peer interaction, parents' involvement, specialised services, such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, counselling, hearing services, speech therapy, crisis management, mobility services or vision services for students with disabilities, and about aids and appliance including lessons in Braille, sign language, drawing or use of audio-tapes.

Section Two of the guideline contained information related to ‘academic activities’. This section includes teachers’ effort for the pupils with disabilities including extra tutorial support, dealing with own teachers’ time, teaching strategies, ability and support for children with disabilities, academic progress and difficulties /academic achievement of children with disabilities in comparison to children without disabilities, and aspects of classroom management.

Using the final section of the guideline participants were asked to focus on the mechanisms and strategies which have proven effective in making the inclusive practice initiatives successful. Participants were also asked to identify the factors which contributed to success, the areas of concerns and constraints, the issues and opportunities that needed to be addressed for successful mainstreaming of children with disabilities, recommendations based on the lessons learned, and the ideal role of a classroom teacher for teaching in an inclusive environment.

For guidance, some prompts were introduced to keep respondents on track such as ‘I am not clear about the...’, ‘What do you mean...’, ‘Tell me more...’, ‘Did I get you correctly?’, ‘Can you give me another example?’ ‘How?’, ‘Why?’, and ‘Really?’

2.4.3 Participant Observation

To support my interview data, I carried out observations of teaching and learning activities of the selected participants (as per figure 3). I observed each participant's class on two occasions (with a maximum of seven to fourteen days interval). Consequently, the participant observation helped me to understand the complexity of the phenomenon as well as the context. I favoured observation because it enables the researcher to collect data through direct experience and also to understand and interpret the settings, the context and the participants' experiences (Bogdan & Taylor, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). The obvious advantage of participant observation is that it provides firsthand reports of events and actions which give us direct knowledge of a subject (Burgess, 1982). It is also helpful for the researcher to be open to uncover and infer the significance for answering any research question.

In line with phenomenological research design, all observations were transcribed while keeping in mind the research objectives. In this case, a semi-structured observation schedule (see appendix 2) was developed based on the work of Mitchell (2008). This schedule reflects attitudes towards evidence-based practice in inclusive settings, so that participants can clarify their practice in the following interview. Therefore, "observation is a purposeful, systematic and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction or phenomenon as it takes place" (Kumar, 2005, p.119).

Narrative methods of recording observations were also considered. “In this forms of recording the researcher records a description of the interaction in his/her own words” (Kumar, 2005, p.121). I used an audio recording device to record all conversations during the observation time. I took brief notes while I was observing the interactions and soon after made detailed narrative note. Then, I started listening to the audio recording and checked the detailed narratives. On the basis of these participant observations, I prepared 12 sets of field notes.

I took appropriate measures to reduce or minimise observer bias and the “Hawthorne Effect” (Kumar, 2005) in my observations to ensure trustworthiness. To minimise the risk of the Hawthorne Effect, two separate observations were made of the same classroom. Kumar defined the Hawthorne effect as

When individuals or groups become aware that they are being observed, they may change their behaviour ... when a change in the behaviour of persons or groups is attributed to their being observed it is known as the Hawthorne effect. (Kumar, 2005, p.120)

2.4.4 Observation Schedules

For carrying out participant observations, one observation schedule with the support of two checklists was introduced. The main schedule contained demographic information of the classroom, seating arrangement, and details incidents occurred during the class. A guideline was used for observing teaching-learning activities. Essential skills for teachers' activities were observed. The 'Guideline for observing teaching learning activities' consists of 11 criteria, which are: professional skills and attitude, planning, content knowledge, communication, group management, methods and classroom management, engagement, questioning, teaching aids, relationship and evaluation.

To evaluate teachers' practice a pre-developed four-point rated checklist was used. The checklist is called the 'Checklist for Evaluating Strategies for Enhancing Learning', which looks for 22 different evidence based practices (classroom teaching strategies) that works in an inclusive classroom. The observations considered to what degree the teachers were employing specific strategies in the classroom within the observation period. The strategies include peer tutoring, reviews and practices, formative assessment, providing feedback, cognitive strategy instruction, formative assessment, self-regulated learning, memory strategies, reciprocal teaching, behavioural approaches, social skills instruction, classroom climate, active learning time, curriculum adapting, assessment

methods, information and communication technology, collaborative teaching, parents' involvement, phonological processing, physical environment, functional behavioural assessment, and optional success.

2.4.5 Questionnaire

The questionnaire (see appendix 3) used in this research was developed to investigate teachers' practices, attitudes and concerns about inclusive education. The questionnaire consisted of two scales. The first scale was a four-point self-rating scale focused on classroom practice. The other scale was a seven-point Likert scale for measuring/judging attitudes along with some open-ended and specific questions, which had been earlier piloted and developed for this study.

The questionnaire provided the opportunity to gather information to support to the understanding of teachers' values and attitudes. The questionnaire was developed by modifying the Sentiments, Attitudes and Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale' (SACIE) (Loreman, Earle, Sharma, & Forlin, 2007) and the Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale [CIES] (Sharma & Desai, 2002). In fact, this quantitative form of data may contribute to an understanding of teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards the central phenomenon of inclusive education practices, as Kumar (2005) states,

Attitudinal scales measure the intensity of respondents' attitudes towards the various aspects of a situation or issue and provide techniques to combine the attitudes towards different aspects into one overall indicator. This reduces the risk of an expression of opinion by respondents being influenced by their opinion on only one or two aspects of that situation or issue. (p.145)

On the other hand, the other significant scale is on classroom teaching-learning practice, which allows the researcher to come to a logical conclusion regarding the central phenomenon. This scale is based on Mitchell's (2008) work, which creates an opportunity for the participants to be able to rate themselves about their strategies and practices for enhancing pupils' learning. This was done on a four-point Likert scale, which was implemented as a bi-directional checklist, containing both positive and negative statements. For example, for any items/statement, if a respondent ticks 'very often', she/he is assumed to have a more (the most) positive on this practice than a person who ticks 'rarely/never'. Hence, the person is Given the highest score, 4. In summary, this scale supported the interview process to explore in depth information regarding practices.

2.4.6 Descriptions of the Scales

A 16-item attitude scale was used to compile information on the nature of teachers' attitudes and support of inclusion within the classroom. All items were rated on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly agree' (7) to 'strongly disagree' (1). The scale is called the 'Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale'. The items include teachers' attitude towards enrolling and engaging students with disabilities in the mainstream. The scale includes teachers' attitude towards students with two years' academic achievement and below, students with physically aggressive behaviour, students with severe physical disability, students with withdrawn behaviour, students with one year's academic achievement and below, students with severe speech difficulties, students with severe visual impairment, and students with severe hearing impairment.

The second scale was the self-rating of teachers' own strategies and practices. Participants rated their strategies and practices on the four point scale. The rated data was verified with the interview and observation data. The scale originated from Mitchell's works on evidence-based practice. On a number of evidence-based strategies, the rating scale used a four-point Likert scale ranging from 'Very often' (4) to 'rarely/never' (1). Overall, 22 items were used for the scale; furthermore an additional item was added for the respondents to list their

own strategies. All items in this scale were modified and prefaced with the heading 'in this school'. The items included self-rating on using mixed ability co-operative group teaching, peer tutoring, reviewing and practicing the key ideas of previous lessons, evaluating pupils' progress during lessons and adjusting of teaching as a result, feedback to all pupils, teaching pupils cognitive strategies; i.e. problem solving strategies, encouraging pupils' to set goals and to evaluate their own progress in achieving them, teaching a range of memory strategies, assisting pupils to improve their reading comprehension by predicting, questioning and summarizing texts, using behavioural approaches, teaching appropriate social skills, creating a classroom climate that is safe, predictable and motivating, ensuring pupils have adequate time for learning, adapting the curriculum to suit the needs of all pupils, adapting assessment methods to suit the needs of all pupils, using available information and communication technology, including assistive technology for pupils with disabilities, co-operating with other professionals and teachers, involving parents in their children's programme, teaching phonological processing, ensuring classroom environment (e.g., lighting, ventilation, sound) is optimal for learning, managing pupils' undesirable social behaviours, and helping pupils achieve a 90 percent or better success rate on critical tasks.

2.5 Participants: Selecting and Gaining Access

This study consists of participant interviews and observations. Theoretically, the participant selection technique used was the snowball sampling technique. “Snowball sampling is the process of selecting a sample using networks” (Kumar, 2005, p.179). Being a teacher educator, I had connections with a numbers of classroom teachers, from whom I obtained the needed information.

I imposed some criteria for selecting the schools. Six schools were purposefully selected. The schools met criteria such as they must have to at least three to four children with documented disabilities in each targeted class enrolled, as Hall and Hall (1996) suggest to select participants on the basis of a preset criterion. Consequently, this posed a challenge when trying to find participants, as there is a natural tendency for parents in Bangladesh to hide their disabled children. For example, in one school, I found a girl with severe intellectual difficulties, and this was also verified by teachers of the school. However, the parents of that child were firmly against the labelling of their child as being disabled.

To reduce conceptual discontinuity regarding the phenomena, class [grade] VI was decided as the target grade. The students in class VI have just entered secondary school after completing their primary education and are typically aged from 11 to 13 years. According to the central prescribed class routine, every day consists of seven periods on seven different subjects taught by different educators. Bangla is the most

common subject according to the class routine. The Bangla class of grade six in the target secondary schools were selected as the participants for the classroom observations. Moreover, the teachers who taught Bangla became study participants. This subject and grade selection helps to reduce any hollow effect. Various variables like age, teaching practice, were also controlled.

It was challenging to find schools that satisfied the study criteria. I visited 70 schools around the country and also met more than a hundred assistant teachers, head teachers and School Managing Committee (SMC) members in different training programmes under different projects. In this case snowball sampling was utilised as a non-random sampling technique and was appropriate for the research,

When it is impossible to identify beforehand all those who might fall into your category of interest. Instead, you start with one or two informants, and get them to refer you on to others whom they think you should talk to as well. Like rolling a snowball, the sample gets bigger the more interviewing you do. (Hall & Hall, 1996, p.113)

Six classroom teachers from six different secondary schools were selected. The participants comprised of three male teachers and three female teachers. Participants' teaching experience varied from six to 20 years. All participants voluntarily participated in the research. The participants' age range was between 30 to 50 years. No participants

reported experiencing any disabilities. All had experienced a minimal orientation on inclusive education. Only four participants had taught students with disabilities previously.

Gaining access to the field is very important for a research study, and this was especially true for the current study. The first approach made for this study was to the central education administrative authority called the Director General (DG) of Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), Ministry of Education of Bangladesh. Subsequently, I approached the schools and finally made personal contact with the prospective participants. In line with Hall & Hall (1996), I did not consider my research as just a descriptive ‘fact-gathering’ (Hall & Hall, 1996, p.30) exercise, but also as a process in gaining an understanding of the social situation of inclusive practice. Potential participants were provided with study information and signed consent forms to participate. No teacher had any objections to participation although some did request that the anonymity of their participation be preserved. Formal permission was obtained from the DSHE (see appendix 10), school authority (see appendix 8) and signed consent from the participant teachers (see appendix 6) before commencing data collection.

2.6 Scope of the Study

This research was limited to six teachers, who agreed to participate in the research from a specific grade level where children with disabilities were studying. A total of 12 interviews (two for each participant) of six teachers from six different mainstream secondary schools in Bangladesh and 12 observations (two of each participant) of six separate classes of those six teachers were conducted. The researcher focussed on the entry grade level of secondary schooling (Class Six). Participant observations were limited to specific subjects' (Bangla) teaching and learning activities in order to understand the central phenomenon.

2.7 Organising, Analysing and Interpreting Data

In line with the research questions and research design, both inductive and deductive reasoning were applied to the data analysis and interpretation process. Data was organised and analysed through the modified method of analysis developed by Moustakas (1994) by the pragmatic modification of Van Kaam's method (1959, 1966, cited in Moustakas, 1994) of analysis of phenomenological data. The complete transcriptions of each interview and observation were used. Interviews were transcribed verbatim. Consisting of rich narratives, the findings related back to the research questions with reference to relevant previous research. Key sub-headings under emerging themes were used to

organise the findings. The themes further explained my theoretical framework as described earlier, and were supported by quantitative data.

The following steps were followed to analyse the qualitative data:

Step-1 Horizontalisation: listing and preliminary grouping

The interview was undertaken in Bangla; the national language of Bangladesh. At the beginning, all the interviews were preliminary transcribed in Bangla, and later translated into English by the researcher. A fluent English-speaking Bangladeshi teacher also reviewed the translations to confirm accuracy and consistency of terminology. Then, the transcribed descriptions were visited and re-visited several times. Every expression relevant to the experiences was listed. Representation of the teachers' experience of disability from the interviews could be an example of horizontalisation. It ensured trustworthiness in terms of being receptive to every statement or activity of the participants.

Step-2 Reduction and elimination

In order to determine the 'invariant constituents' (Moustakas 1994, p.120) each expression was tested for two requirements:

- (a) Does it contain a moment of the experience that is a necessary and sufficient constituent to understand it?
- (b) Is it possible to abstract and label it? (Moustakas 1994, p.121)

If the expression met the above requirements, it was accepted as a horizon of experience. If the expression did not meet the above two requirements, it was eliminated. In this respect, the data (expressions) were examined carefully to identify the overlapping, repetitive, and vague expressions to be removed. Afterwards the expressions were presented in 'more exact descriptive terms' (p.121). After removing the expression, the remaining horizons constituted the 'invariant constituents of experience.'

Step-3 Clustering and thematic categorisation of the invariant constituents

This stage involved the development of clusters of the relevant invariant constituents of the experiences under a thematic level, which were considered the core themes of the participants' experiences. Some examples were enrolment and assessment, lesson planning and teaching practice, teachers' consciousness and expectations, hidden disability, and barriers.

Step-4 Final identification of the invariant constituents and themes by application

After labelling each of the themes, the invariant constituents were verified and their complementary themes on the basis of complete records of the research participants. In this case, I considered the following three criteria, as suggested by Moustakas (1994),

- (1) Are they expressed explicitly in the complete transcription?;
- (2) Are they compatible if not explicitly expressed?;
- (3) If they are not explicit or compatible, they are not relevant and should be deleted. (p.121)

Step-5 Forming individual textural descriptions

Individual textural descriptions were formed for each participant using the relevant, valid invariant constituents and themes. Verbatim examples were included from the transcription and field notes for each individual textural description. For example, “teaching of teacher is aiming towards the examination”.

Step-6 Constructing individual structural descriptions

At this stage, I prepared an individual structural description of the experience for each participant on the basis of their individual textural description and imaginative narration.

Step-7 Constructing textural structural descriptions

At this penultimate stage I synthesised by constructing a textural-structural description of the meaning and essence of the experiences for each participants, which incorporated invariant constituents and themes.

Finally, from the individual textural structural descriptions, I developed a composite description of the meanings and essence of the experience, representing the group as a whole.

The individual textural structural descriptions were focused on the characteristics of the phenomenon. For this reason, quantitative methods of analysis with various statistical strategies were considered for supporting the individual textural structural descriptions. Hence, all variables were initially screened for accuracy and normality through computing descriptive statistics for each test variable. Frequency distributions with histograms and descriptive statistics (mean or median, standard deviation) were used to identify any characteristics of shape or distribution that might affect the analysis. On the other hand all variables were within normal limits, which is why parametric procedures were carried out for statistical analyses. The median is the appropriate average for ordinal scales (Hall & Hall, 1996, p.140) that allows us to explore the exact reason behind the construction of teachers' understanding of the phenomenon. This analysis supports 'the composite description' that came from the individual textural structural descriptions.

2.8 Analysis of Observation Data

All the participant observations were made in the classroom setting. Though participant observation was conducted to support the interview data, six analytical memos were prepared from 12 sets of field notes focusing on inclusive education practice in mainstream settings. As a

part of the study, the analytical memo was based on the phenomenological approach of using field notes based on participant observations. The analytic memo concentrates on a micro-level inclusive framework, focusing on teachers experiences of 'inclusive education practice'. The qualitative analysis in the analytical memo explores different issues relating to the original research question from the point of view of practicing teachers of secondary schools. In this way, the voice of the teacher is brought forward.

I read all field notes several times. After reading the field notes, I came up with an initial set of coding categories, and then applied these categories to the field notes in order to code the data. Data were then grouped together according to the codes. The coding reflected six themes that emerged from the interviews.

2.9 Validity, Reliability, Rigour and Trustworthiness

The above analysis method was selected and followed in order to ensure trustworthiness of the data and analysis. For interpretivist approaches, the notion of trustworthiness is an indicator of 'rigour' (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). According to Lincoln and Guba (1989), rigour is associated with considerations of trustworthiness of the qualitative research. Several reports have identified four aspects of trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1989; 1985). These are credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. The current research embraces all of these of aspects.

Credibility is addressed by comprehensive and well-linked accounts where areas of uncertainty are identified. For ensuring trustworthiness of the data, copies of the textural-structural descriptions were sent to the participants for “member-checking”. They were requested to examine the transcribed descriptions carefully and encouraged to search for any inconsistencies. I also asked them to make additions and necessary corrections. The findings were also reviewed in the research process at the end of data collection. In transforming the textural-structural descriptions from Bangla to English, they were validated by a bilingual teacher from Bangladesh for accuracy and exact transformation.

2.10 Triangulation

In the field of social research, most of the data obtained were subjective or qualitative in nature (Bogdan & Beklein, 2007). To verify or validate such data, triangulation is thought of as a way of checking out gleaned information from the field (Bogdan & Taylor, 1998), “using different research methods or sources of data to examine the same problem” (Hall & Hall, 1996, p.44). In this research, triangulation was introduced in order to be assured that the acquired information was valid and accurate.

Interview 1 data was verified with observation 1 and participant observation 2 data was cross-checked with interview data as per figure 3. In addition, teachers’ interview data was compared and contrasted with the attitude scale and rating data. The rationale for this approach was to

increase the validity of any conclusions reached during the study (Cohen & Manion, 1994).

2.11 Ethical Issues

Ethical issues were considered in the whole research process, from design to report, and this study adheres to the guidelines of the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee (ERHEC) of the University of Canterbury. The project got ethical approval from the ERHIC as on 13th October 2010 [ERHIC letter ref: 2010/56/ERHIC] (see appendix 9).

Informed consent (Elense & Peshkin, 1993; Tolich & Davidson, 1999) was obtained before interviewing and observing (as per appendices 6 & 8). Anonymity, confidentiality and voluntary participants for interviews were adhered to. For the questionnaire, confidentiality and voluntary participants were ensured. For this purpose, participant names were linked to an identity code and original participant names were stored securely (e.g., in a spreadsheet with password protection and stored in a locked filing cabinet). Strategies of using pseudonyms were undertaken in writing up of the findings and the production of the final report.

An information letter was prepared covering all of the ethical guide lines of ERHEC of the University of Canterbury (ERHEC, 2009). The participants were informed of the possible use of findings. Participation in the study was voluntary. Moreover the information letter clearly indicated the data treatment procedures. In this way, the participants'

safety was ensured. Thus, the statements in the letters (see appendices 5 & 7) enabled the potential participants to decide whether or not to participate in the research. Confidentiality was ensured through procedures of handling data. This is why transcribed interviews were shared with the interviewees concerned.

There were some potential risk factors in this research. These involved the issue of power and authority. As a lecturer of education, I was in a position of authority for participants according to job descriptions. As a result they may have felt some discomfort at refusing my request for participation. Strategies to minimise any sense of obligation or coercion for participants included calling for expressions of interest from teachers who might like to be involved in the research process. The interviewing process may have caused some social discomfort to participants in reporting their own practice. In order to address such discomfort, I conducted the one-to-one interviews in a safe and comfortable place. Participants were informed that responses were voluntary. I built strong rapport with the participants before interviewing. I would like to think that the participants of the research felt enhanced rather than diminished by participating in the research. In order to reduce possible tension between collaboration and ownership of findings, participants were offered feedback. This involved providing interview transcripts to participants for their checking and opinions.

Chapter 3

Results

This chapter presents the results of the study from phenomenological interviews, participant observation and questionnaires. The findings explore teachers' perspectives and understanding of inclusive education. Qualitative analysis shows that most respondents are in favour of inclusive education practices, but face enormous challenges to achieve this goal. The findings are supported by the analytical memos of semi-structured participant observation, further backed by the quantitative data. Observation data indicate difficulties in implementing evidence-based practices in the classroom. Quantitative data from the questionnaire indicated that participants have a positive attitude towards inclusive education, but they are not sure how to practice inclusion.

3.1 Qualitative Analysis from Interviews

The qualitative findings are presented here within six themes that emerged from the interview data supported by analytical memos based on participant observations. The themes identified are: pragmatic views of inclusive education, pros and cons of inclusive education practice, empowering the teachers, teaching and learning practices, enrolment and evaluation systems, and social dialogue for inclusive education practice. Within each thematic category, a series of sub-themes is presented.

3.1.1. Pragmatic View of Inclusive Education

The theme ‘pragmatic view of inclusive education’ describes the concept of inclusive education, the need for inclusive education practice, and perceptions of inclusive education after teachers gained classroom experience. In this theme, participants also indicate the pros and cons of inclusive education practice.

3.1.1.1 What is Inclusive Education?

Participants were asked about their understanding of the term inclusive education. In response, participants reflected on their practical experiences. They mostly described inclusive education as a unique system of education aiming to teach every child in the same classroom. One respondent stated that

Inclusive education for students with disabilities means conducting teaching learning activities comprising all children, I mean that all male, female students together with students with disabilities in the general classroom.

In line with this statement, another respondent added, “Inclusive education is about values and morality”. One of the respondents also emphasised the importance of equality in facilities by stating that “Inclusive education means learners from all stages of a society can be studying in the same institution with getting equal facilities”. Another

participant had doubts about inclusive education. According to his view, “My idea is not clear enough, I think that teaching disadvantaged or children from poor families may create problems in the classroom. Inclusive education should minimise the problem situations”.

One respondent thought that inclusive education was all about children with disabilities. She claimed, “I think that inclusive education is for students with disabilities; is a way of encouraging them to education; sometimes providing them opportunities for sports and music (co-curricular activities).” Another respondent further added, “Inclusion is an idea, a phenomenon, a motion or action of teaching everyone in the same classroom. Cooperation is the key element.”

Regarding inclusive education for students with disabilities, one respondent viewed inclusive education as,

A promise for the disabled towards leading a beautiful-healthy life, because in the long run, it will directly promote the social as well as mental development of them. After all, it recognises their valuable souls which are of equal importance to others.

It is clear from the above that most participants considered inclusive education from a rights-based perspective. This encourages the investigation of the meaning of the phenomenon in depth, because the success of inclusive education depends on how well teachers understand

inclusion. Interview data also showed that inclusive education is leading to the widening of participation to include students from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and social classes. For instance, one respondent discovered, “the students in the classroom were from different parts of the society and they represented different cultures, identities, and past experiences”, and another respondent described, “When I looked around the classroom I could see people from all walks of life, from disable to able, poor-rich, and from different socio-economic condition and religion”.

3.1.1.2 Need for Inclusive Education Practice

Respondents stated the need for and potential benefits of inclusive education practice. This is a common ethos among participants that is reflected in this respondent’s comment, “Students with disabilities have the same rights to education like others in the same institution”. Similar ideas were expressed by other respondents.

One found inclusive practice brought positive change in the mind of all regarding others potentiality, as he said, “Students with disabilities become mentally strong if they get a chance to be educated with the non-disabled” and “I was afraid when I found one VI [visual impaired] and one HI [hearing impaired] student in my class. After a shorter period, I noticed that all the other students were helping them”. Then he stated that inclusive education was supporting collaboration among students

with and without disabilities. Another respondent also reported similar experiences, “In my inclusive education settings, X and Y [visually impaired] can exchange and share their ideas with their peers”.

The positive effects of inclusive education for individuals and communities were reflected in several responses –

Inclusion fosters social integration in the case of one of my students with mild intellectual deficits. Once, he was avoided by his peers. I encouraged the class by pointing his potentials. Now, he is well accepted. His shortcomings are now seen as an opportunity for development. Everyone is supporting their hands, even helps him to come to school, or preparing the task.

and

After all, I think that inclusive education is beneficial for all students in education, because I think that it is socially enriching, not psychologically stunting, ensuring better acceptance of students with disabilities, creating chances for them to receive education in their familiar environment.” These comments highlighted the teachers’ level of awareness of the importance of inclusive education and led to discussion about the steps involved in achieving an inclusive classroom environment.

3.1.1.3 The Way to Success within an Inclusive Setting

The questions asked was ‘What contributes to success for students with disabilities within an inclusive classroom?’ Respondents identified the need for an accurate early screening and intervention system, positive attitude in society, friendly learning environments, involvement of parents, changing the traditional system of teaching-learning activities, making appropriate policy, empowering teachers in taking decision for their learners needs, creating scopes of professional development for the teachers, developing the support services, serve necessary aids and appliances for the special child, and appropriate evaluation system. Several respondents also communicated the following: “It is useless, unless we have an appropriate early intervention system. We do not have a proper screening system either”; “We need first to ensure their [students with disabilities] acceptance in society. I don’t want to lose any of my bright students [without a disability] as a result of inclusion”.

Respondents also identified barriers that limit the success for students with disabilities. The need for specific professional development to support teacher development of inclusive education strategies was also indicated by comments such as -

“I realised that I need training to develop my teaching-learning activities. I found that classroom management for students with disabilities is quite different. I need professional development in this area to embrace inclusion”. Similarly, the need for different teaching styles for students

with disabilities was indicated by the comment “We have to teach students with disabilities with great patient and tolerance at the secondary level. I provide them equal importance in the classroom.”

The need for specific and individualised assessment was highlighted by this comment “I analysed them individually, now I am clear about their deficiency. I can now understand them easily”.

In fact, the participants learned a lot from their experiences, though the inclusion process has not been initiated for too long. One respondent said, “It would be helpful to improve our quality of education by including students with disabilities into the mainstream classroom. Ultimately, we are going for improved teaching and learning.” Another teacher felt that their attitudes needed to be changed. He said, “Our attitudes need to be changed. By changing our negative attitude, we can easily teach students with disabilities in collaboration with others.” From the societal perspective, respondents felt the necessity of inclusive education, as one respondent said, “Students with disabilities is the inhabitant of our society. Inclusive education is essential to ensure development. We should try to make them independent rather burden to the society”.

These comments indicate a variety of strategies and considerations to successful inclusive education. The strategies and barriers identified are likely the result of participants’ beliefs and experiences in relation to students with disabilities and professional development support. This line

of questioning in the interview then led to discussion on the benefits and costs of inclusive education.

3.1.2 Pros and Cons of Inclusive Education Practice

Under the theme, participants identified numerous barriers and challenges encountered in practicing inclusive education. Three subthemes emerged: a) barriers and challenges of inclusive education practice, b) educating students with disabilities at secondary school, and c) knowledge constraint. Participants explored barriers from Macro to Micro level. Challenges come from society's negative attitudes to personal responsibilities. According to the participants, inclusive education is still the most feasible education option for students with disabilities at secondary school in Bangladesh, however this is forcing teachers to modify traditional teaching and learning practices.

3.1.2.1 Barriers and Challenges of Inclusive Education Practice

In response to the question, "What are the barriers and challenges to inclusive education practice in Bangladesh?" the respondents identified multidimensional barriers and significant challenges. Negative societal attitudes were a commonly reported barrier to inclusive education practices. In this regard, one respondent depicted the apathy of the parents of normal children:

Once a parent asked me how those disturbing students [indicating two of intellectual disabled students] get enrolled. I wouldn't like

that my child mixing with them or playing with them. I'm afraid that my child would be like them if he comes into contact with them.

Accessibility in terms of physical admittance was also identified as a problem for students with physical disabilities the disabled.

My school is a three storied building. There is no ramp in my school and the number of classroom was not sufficient enough. It is very difficult for the physical disabled children with wheelchair to go upstairs to attend class. I felt sorry for one of my students who were dropped from class seven to class six because, the classroom was on the second floor. Either the child was unable to go upstairs, or the school had difficulty rearranging access to the classroom. It seemed that a rose was fallen even before blooming.

All the respondents indicated that their large class sizes were barriers to effective teaching and learning. One respondent asked, "How could I manage a class where usually 80 out of 97 students are present. Seating arrangements are not comfortable for the student. It is too congested..." Cultural practices were also identified as a barrier to inclusion by one respondent who stated, "Inclusion is a good concept, but you need to remember child labour is prevalent. Many children need to work and earn to supplement a meagre family income and therefore do not attend school".

Such a negative scenario contrasts with the positive inclusive education initiatives being put forward by the State. Identifying barriers to inclusion at school level, the study considers a narrative from one of the participant teachers:

We have every wish to include children with disabilities into our regular classroom, even though it may increase our workload, but we are not sure how to handle those children, I had no training in disability during my pre-service B.Ed. From the CPD [Continuous Professional Development] Training under TQI-SEP [MoE], I received inadequate knowledge on disabilities.

Several participants also view centralised policy-making as a barrier with this comment -

Nothing could be running smoothly without empowering us (teachers). It is the teachers who are behind all success or failure. We have no access in policy making or decision making for ensuring success of my students. I am bound to do so according to the guidelines of the text book.

The lack of provision of specialist support for some students was identified as a barrier evidenced by this comment “We are facing barriers such as the need for special care. We need professional support to provide this care. Beside physical infrastructure is not friendly. There is no ramp in our school.”

Three teachers also remarked on micro-level logistical problems such as variety and unfamiliarity of classes required to teach and substandard physical classroom spaces, in their teaching practice as barriers to inclusive education. Their statements were -

...excessive teaching load. I used to teach Bangla in VI, Computer Science in VII, Science in VIII and Chemistry for the class IX and X. You would not believe that I also teach English in the class IX and X.;

“The school building is a problem. It is a tin-shaded house, and it became difficult to stay inside during summer due to the hot temperature. Students became impatient and inattentive during hot weather.”

I conduct six out of seven sessions each day. I experience different subjects including Hindu religion. I am not a teacher of Hindu religion but I am a Hindu. There is no Hindu teacher in my school, so the head teacher asked me to teach Hindu religion.

These logistical difficulties reported highlight some of the additional barriers experienced by teachers in Bangladesh that may not be such prominent barriers in other parts of the world.

3.1.2.2 Educating Students with Disabilities at Secondary Level in Bangladesh

The participants were asked to describe the best possible options of education for students with disabilities. Four out of six participants were strongly in support of inclusive education as the most feasible option for providing education for students with disabilities at secondary school in Bangladesh. Supporting statements included “Acceptance will be increased” and “It will introduce a competitive mindset to do well. Even, students with disabilities could learn within the setting. Moreover, it can develop trustworthiness among teachers and students.” One participant indicated a preference for the establishment of special institutions for these students.

Living independently would be the goal of education for the student with disabilities that involve vocational training. That is why I support having different institutions for the disabled, where they can learn better. They will not feel shy there due to not having their nondisabled peers.

The participants also expressed a lack of knowledge and acceptance among society and schools about the education of students with disabilities at secondary school. They pointed out lack of societal consciousness and spirit as well as negative attitudes of schools as challenges for developing fully inclusive secondary schools. One

respondent said that “According to my view, our education system itself is an obstacle for educating students with disabilities at secondary school, the rigid curriculum and examination-based teaching is a problem for them”.

The interview data suggested that the teachers experienced technical difficulties in attempting to teach students with disabilities in their classroom. One respondent reported,

I face a lot of problems in teaching students with disabilities in my class. To raise their attention, I struggle everyday but I could not be angry with them... In some cases, I just overlook students with disabilities for the sake of others learning.

3.1.2.3 Knowledge on Legislation

Both the interviews as well as the analytical memos showed that the respondents had a lack of knowledge on local disability legalisation. This is likely to limit the scope for students with disabilities to gain access to what is rightfully theirs. It was notable that most of the respondents ignored or had no knowledge of the Disability Welfare Act (Ministry of Social Welfare, 2001). The act helps to identify the rights to education for the Students with disabilities. A teacher explained the cause of why they were ignorant: “Our school has nothing regarding the law. It is important to know about legal frameworks. I heard of that law but

haven't read it yet". Another respondent said, "I know not too much about the law, but I would like to the policy makers to have an appropriate and effective law for the welfare of all". However, there was agreement among participants that a legal framework is essential to establish someone's right in a formal institution.

3.1.3. Enrolment and Evaluation System

The theme '*enrolment and evaluation system*' shows that the present enrolment and assessment systems are mismatched with inclusive education. The enrolment system was too competitive for children with disabilities in contrast to their peers. If students with disabilities could overcome the barrier of enrolment, they certainly face barriers from the assessment system. The assessment system is very rigid without any consideration for students with diverse learning needs.

3.1.3.1 Non-supportive Enrolment Procedure

The participants confirmed that school enrolment procedures were an obstacle for the development of inclusive education in secondary schools. A respondent found the enrolment system to be too rigid for students with disabilities.

Inclusive education is just beginning, we are hopeful, inclusion can explore their [students with disabilities] rights to education. It

will take time to change the school entry system. Any change in enrolment system will encourage students with disabilities to get an education.

On the other hand, another respondent focused on the enrolment procedures,

In our Government School, we are enrolling students based on a competitive test. For each seat, we receive 10 to 30 applications. PD [physical disabled] has no problem, but it becomes very difficult for the ID [intellectual disabled] student to perform well enough and get the chance to be enrolled.

Finally a respondent was in favour of flexible enrolment procedures for the student with disabilities. He said, “We should have special policy to consider students with intellectual disabilities...”

3.1.3.2 Assessment and Evaluation

The assessment and evaluation system was identified as needing to be modified in order to better embrace inclusive education. The respondents commented that classroom assessment should empower both teachers and their students in order to support the quality of learning in the classroom. According to one respondent,

After the end of the day, the student with disabilities might not be able to cross the hurdle of an examination as students without

disabilities might do. We make our judgement on the basis of examination marks. According our evaluation, they may get fail marks.

The shortcomings of the assessment system were further highlighted by a report of a student being held back a year as he did not meet the assessment criteria for advancement to the next class. However, several teachers recognised the necessity of having a policy option for reconsidering the progress of students with disabilities. One teacher stated, “Our evaluation system is fixed and no way to alter it. So, we need to have a guidelines regarding assessing children with disabilities and promoting them to the next grade.”

The issue of separate assessment within inclusive education was raised during the interviews. For example

We are assessing them (students with disabilities) with the same criteria as the other students. In the case of intellectual disabilities, they have a limitation in receiving knowledge, thus, they can’t do well and their schooling is questioned by many others.

Teachers expressed frustration with the examination system with one teacher reporting “We are agreeing to do everything for the child with a disability, but the exam system makes our effort worse” and an additional

comment of “Our evaluation system sometimes create inferiority complex for the disabled when they could not get success”.

3.1.3.2 Peer-Assessment

Three respondents reported introducing peer-assessment procedures in order to understand student progress. The respondents thought that peer-assessment is uniquely valuable because learners may accept, from one another, criticism of their work, which they would not take seriously if received from their teacher. Participants expressed their experiences about peer assessment in the following ways:

“I usually give a task to write, and then swap the answer sheet between students...They do in a very mature and sensible way and this has proved to be very worthwhile...”.

They [students with disabilities] take pride in clear and well-presented work that one of their peers may be asked to mark. Any disagreement about the answer is thoroughly and openly discussed until agreement is reached. This means that when learners do not understand an explanation, they are likely to interrupt fellow learners... (Interview 1)

“Peer marking is very helpful indeed. A lot of misconceptions come to the fore and then they discuss issues as they are going over the homework”.

3.1.4. Teaching and Learning Practice

This theme covers areas related to teaching and learning practice explored by participants during the interviews. The theme includes: a) Quest for effective teaching and learning (T-L) strategies, b) Lesson planning, and c) Classroom teaching strategies. The participants appeared to be challenged by reflecting on making decisions regarding their teaching practice. For example, in response to the question ‘What would be the goal of their teaching strategies?’ One respondent stated, “Teaching for all or teaching for majority? Is a big question.” Several participants appeared to have an attitude of avoidance towards teaching students with disabilities, preferring to concentrate on teaching the majority. Several respondents were attempting to ensure their teaching was targeting all students. This involved reflection on a number of teaching and learning strategies.

3.1.4.1 Quest for Effective T-L Strategies

Participants were eager to be successful in their classroom teaching with students with disabilities. One participant stated, “This is the second time in my teaching career, that I have a student with disabilities. I am doing experiments with the methods which I had learned during CPD training”. Another respondent said, “I rely on trial and error... I try to be good for the students”.

Interview data show that participants explored effective teaching and learning strategies. The use of visualisation strategies was an example of reported teaching and learning strategies. For example, one respondent said,

There are two HI students and one mild ID student in my class. There was a lesson in Bangla (literature) called '*Rakte Lekha Mukti Joddo*' [Blood shaded war of independence]. It was very difficult for me to make them understand what the war of independence was and the cruel incidents related to it? We shed blood and sacrificed thousands of lives in the war. How can I teach such literature to them? After thinking a lot, I prepared so many posters with pictures of the war of independence; I brought our National Flag and Map of our country before and after war. This visualisation helped my students to understand these times and concepts.

3.1.4.2 Lesson Plans

The use of lesson plans was linked to successful teaching. The respondents appeared to be negative towards preparing lesson plans regularly. One teacher voiced this negativity by stating, "With a heavy workload I can't prepare lesson plans. But, a plan always works in my brain." In response to the question 'How should be the lesson be

planned?’ one respondent said, “I often think that in the lesson planning, there should be an option for including a plan on how to deal with students with disabilities, but I don’t know much about teaching disabled students.”

Lesson planning was supported by reflective note taking for several respondents. “I maintain a diary where I include routine information stating the date, class, duration, subject, and topic, learning outcomes for specific lesson. I also note background information about the students”. Writing a journal provided the logical directions for a respondent. According to him, it ensured effective learning of all children in the inclusive classroom. “Every day I write a journal. I record what I did, how well certain activities worked, how students with or without disabilities felt about the activities.” Another participant said, “A journal helps me to look back after returning from the classroom. It also helps me to be self-critical and self-reflective, as well as help record insights of students with disabilities of the class.”

3.1.4.3 Classroom Teaching Strategies

The participants were asked the question “what are effective classroom teaching methods?” According to one respondent, “Teachers’ personal methods of teaching are the best of all. It is the teacher who is responsible for the progress of students”. Participants found that enrolling a student

with disabilities in their classroom helped them shape their practice. One respondent appeared frustrated with his teaching practice as he called inclusive education a discriminatory education system. He stated, “We are facing enormous challenges, creating extra burdens on us...”. Another teacher stated, “The presence of a student with disability would change your practice. I developed more participatory methods after I found two disabled students in my class”.

Study respondents specifically mentioned a number of teaching strategies which were used in their classrooms. These strategies included: cooperative group teaching, assignments, review and practice, brainstorming, mind maps, questioning, lectures, role-plays, feedback, discussions, homework tasks, group work, and phonological methods. Teachers reported cooperating group teaching, assignment, reviewing, and group work, questioning, brain storming as the most effective methods. For example, in discussing role-playing one teacher recollected the dramatisation of an interesting story had made his students attentive and apparently happy. Additional respondents stated that role-playing may support the development of higher order thinking skills. However, one respondent suggested the need for role-playing to be well planned and prepared, in order to prevent negative experiences. His experience was-

Once, I decided to introduce role-play in my class. Students were enjoying this too much and the class ran out of control. A student with disabilities (intellectual disabled) made a mistake in playing his role. He had just forgotten his dialogue.

3.1.4.4 Managing the Class

With regard to classroom management, respondents expressed a number of challenges experienced with large class size. They reported a few strategies to manage large and difficult class. One respondent said,

My class is too large and crowded. I used to assign each student to a seat and regularly rotate rows so all students have time in the front rows as well as the back rows. But I put students with disabilities in the first rows.

Another teacher focused on the use of teaching aids to manage a large class. One respondent said,

We have very few teaching aids in our school. So I prepare my own aids by using students to help collect items, cut items from newspapers, magazines, draw and write on card. I was also supplied with unused wall-calendars to draw chart and draw or pest picture...

Knowledge of individual students was noted as an important aspect of managing the classroom. One respondent said,

I think that knowing students in person is important. I talk with my students outside as well as inside the classroom in order to get to know them as a person, because a positive relationship with my students builds a willingness on their part to actively participate in class.

Similarly a respondent reported to the importance of listening to the students in order to manage classroom - "I always take care to listen to the student including interpreting words and actions. Listening carefully helps me determine the students' needs".

The importance of communication in effectively managing large classes was also reported by statements such as

Communicating effectively is important to teach in an inclusive setting, because, we have to communicate with many people throughout the day: parents, children, support staff, the general public, and administrators. I am always prepared to communicate with all of these people and feel comfortable opening up, asking questions, seeking advice, and sharing my experiences.

The issue of managing behaviours in the classroom was the subject of many responses. Most participants reported the use of alternative

practices to support behaviour management. For example, one respondent said, “Once one of my students produced a big shout all in a sudden, I avoid punishment, so asked him to come forward and sit on the first bench”. Another respondent stated “Kalim (pseudonym), a hyperactive child in my class, behaved in a disturbing manner, then I asked him a few questions on the basis of my teaching, and also asked him to read a part of the text loudly.”

3.1.5. Hidden Disability and Inclusive Practices in Secondary Schools

This section explores respondents’ opinions and experiences of hidden disabilities. The term hidden disabilities refer to disabilities that are not visually obvious such as learning difficulties. Respondents reported that hidden disabilities were a problem for inclusion in Bangladesh, as one respondent stated “They have no significant noticeable problem, but they could not understand the lesson. They do not pay attention to the classroom activities.” Teachers appear to have no option of diagnosing or identifying hidden disabilities, especially in case of learning disabilities. Teachers reportedly treat them as “dull” students who are not able to learn similar to others. The following conversation with teacher X during an interview revealed such issues for inclusive practice at secondary level in Bangladesh.

Teacher (T). I have received training on IE. In my class, there is student called 'Anil'. He is not treated/diagnosed as disabled. But I found that he is very slow in learning, can't understand anything quickly. If you look at his past academic records, you may see a very frustrated picture. My question is why? Is he not disabled?

Researcher (R). What do you think?

T. I think he is also disabled. Though he has not diagnosed, but he has serious learning disabilities. His disabilities are hidden. He looks in normal physical condition..... Due to his hidden disabilities, several students have bullied him. He doesn't like school now.

R. What can we do for children like him?

T. Only true inclusive education with appropriate diagnosis can prevalent these students. We need to be aware of hidden disabilities.

Other respondents also reported that students with attention deficit disorder needed special attention and intervention to support access to the learning environment.

Additional reports of students with hidden disability included

I have a student who has speech problems. He can't express his thoughts well verbally or in writing. He makes a number of spelling mistakes in exams. I think that he may be intelligent... he even cannot read spontaneously...He is not disabled, what can I do?

3.1.6. Empowering Teachers in the Classrooms

The theme '*empowering teachers in the classrooms*' shows that the presence of students with disabilities in the classroom is the first step towards ensuring classrooms and teachers practiced inclusive education. Analysis of teacher responses indicates that strategies and policies that may support the empowerment of classrooms and also support teachers in ensuring progress of students in the class. Respondents reported different styles and ideas to empower their classrooms. This section explores the state of classroom teaching from empowerment perspectives and discusses the presence of students with disabilities in the classroom and role of the classroom teacher. Sub-themes presented here included teachers' aspiration within practice and teaching social skills.

3.1.6.1 Aspirations within Practice

The presence of students with disabilities in the classroom offers a challenge for educators. When responding to the question about the problems teachers face in order to teach their class, respondents stated

many challenges due to the presence of students with disabilities. However, one respondent reported no problems in teaching children with disabilities. A lack of knowledge on various disabilities such as hearing and visual impairments and intellectual disabilities presented some teachers with challenges.

One teacher reported the challenge of teaching a student with hearing-impaired in her regular classroom. This teacher stated “As a teacher, I feel a problem with hearing-impaired students is the need for me to repeat important vocabulary that kills valuable teaching time”. Another respondent stated, “I often fail to communicate with them (students with hearing impairment), because I am inexperienced with sign language.” Even though this teacher’s attitude reflected negativity towards inclusive practices, she appeared to be working towards developing inclusion as she reported “We need to pay attention to our students’ specific problems when they arise, special attention to students with hearing impairment include rearranging the seating arrangement.” Similarly, a teacher who had a student with visual impairment in his classroom was unfamiliar with the Braille system. He stated “Do you suggest me to learn Braille? I have no such time”. He also reported “they could not understand visual T-L activities well, they also don’t make an effort in group work, and sometimes cannot read the blackboard or sometimes they are not

prepared for the lesson”. One respondent rejected the concept of inclusive education for specific children:

According to my view, inclusive education is not possible for students with visual impairment or hearing impairment, but could be effective for the students with mild intellectual disabilities and physical disabilities. We should have an option of separate schools for severe HI and VI students.

Consideration of the interview data indicated that respondents thought a good teacher who practiced inclusion should be ‘honest, committed to the task, and resourceful’. One participant said,

I realise, for teaching, we should be a lot more honest, resourceful, and patriotic and compassionate than general. The good teachers are those who truly and deeply respect their tasks and who try to do their duty to their utmost ability.

Another respondent added, “to be a good teacher, we also need to teach children with disabilities”.

When comparing the responses from respondents from urban schools and rural schools, there appeared to be differences between their practices. Teachers from urban schools appeared more open to the concepts and practice of inclusion than rural teachers. Observation data also confirmed that the urban-rural gap was potentially creating a vacuum at the

secondary level in terms of quality of practice. “We should give more attention regarding the education of students with disabilities in rural areas...in the rural area, problems are enormous for students with disabilities”. One teacher from a school situated in a rural area of the country explains his experience, “Once I felt a need to be familiar with Braille due to the presence of a student with VI in my class. But I got no support from my locality and surrounding areas. It’s frustrating.” The need for support from a national level was voiced by one respondent when he stated that

The government should take meaningful steps to bring Students with disabilities forward in education. Their education should be free and should introduce allowances for their parents. We also need to appoint teacher with disabilities and encourage them as well in society.

For doing well in the classroom, respondents would like to have some support. Most of the respondents felt the need of continuous professional development training. One respondent said, “I have no such training on disability.” Another participant was looking for support from professionals. As one respondent describes, “Sometimes, I could not understand what actually he [one of ID student] wants. I need support from professionals. There should be facilities where I could seek specialised advice and support”. For the reason, one respondent said, “I

do need a teaching assistant who will work with my disabled student”. Several of these reported aspirations of teachers within their practice also touch on the need for increased teacher responsibility in developing inclusive practices.

3.1.6.2 Teachers’ Responsibility

Interview data revealed a number of pre-requisites for teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive setting in secondary schools. The feeling of ‘safe’ is an important pre requisite for learning in an inclusive setting. One respondent stated, “The student with disability in a mainstream classroom can learn well if they get cooperation and help from other. In my class, there was a student called Shimul who has problem in his right foot”. He further added,

Shimul was a meritorious student but it was unpleasant for him to sit on bench or move around. His fellow students help him. It creates a sense of safety for Shimul in the classroom that makes his mind cheerful and ready to learn.

The issue of differentiation and highlighting disabilities was raised by another respondent who suggested “The student with or without disability are both of my students. I shouldn’t differentiate among them”.

For empowering the classroom it is essential to be clear about teachers’ responsibilities, which may change in an inclusive setting. One

respondent said, “As a teacher, I have some duties beyond my academic activities”. Respondents mentioned their own strategies of working towards success within the inclusive classroom. Respondents said their strategies were as: “I will teach a PWD with a good coordination with non-disabled in my class. It’s my duty to ensure a cordial environment in my classroom, where everyone is cooperative and friendly”.

Respondents linked their ethos of care to their success. A caring attitude towards students with disabilities appeared to help the teacher to be successful. One respondent said,

It is true that there is some problem for us having the student with disabilities in the classroom. We need to pay special attention to them. Our time is limited and students’ number is big. It is really a challenging task to refrain the non-disabled from bullying students with disabilities.

Another respondent said, “Teachers need to be more careful when student with disabilities are included in his/her class. As a manager I always take care of my disabled students.” However, providing excessive special attention may create problems as one respondent stated,

At the beginning I felt there were few problems in the classroom with two students with disabilities. For example, one student was sort of hearing impaired. For them, I had to spend more time, I

had to pronounce every sentence several times, and I also had to get close to him. It was like an exam of patience for me. I was running behind my syllabus.

This reported need for extra attention by teachers links with the reported need for teachers to support the development of social skills among students with disabilities.

3.1.6.3 Teaching Social Skills to Students with Disabilities

Respondents identified social skills as being important to learn well. The interview and observation data confirmed that three respondents regularly included the specific teaching of social skills in their lessons. Social skills were also included in their lessons only when related to the content. For example, a respondent noted “I ask my students every day to respect their elders and obey the social customs. In my lessons, I present various stories from social life related to the task. It helps them to be aware of social rules”.

The interview data shows that due to the requirements of the new school-based assessment system, the teacher has to focus on social skills. It was found in four observations that teachers were conscious about the cleanliness of the classroom which several respondents linked to promoting social skills. For example,

I formed 10 groups who will clean up the classroom before school hour by rotation. The group members of each group need to come early on their assigned day of cleaning. The disabled children are also included. Now they are confident about their duties.

3.2 Analysis of Questionnaire

This section presents findings from the analysis of the questionnaire including two scales along with several open-ended questions (see appendix 3). The administration of questionnaires in person by the researcher enabled 100% return rate. The questionnaire was developed to determine sentiments, attitudes and concerns about inclusive education amongst practicing teachers. The questionnaire also sheds light on their practices. There are two scales featured in the questionnaire. One scale is ‘Attitudes toward Inclusive Education Scale [ATIES]’, and other is ‘Rate Yourself about Your Strategies and Practices’.

3.2.1 Attitudes and Beliefs

The ATIES scale was used to compile information on the nature of teaching strategies used in the classroom. All items were rated on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (7) to strongly disagree (1). Responses to the items on the scale were analysed to determine the reliability of the items presented. As the scales/questions used were experimental in nature, all responses across all participants were combined in a classical item analysis. Internal consistency

reliability for the 16-item attitude scales yielded a coefficient alpha of 0.926 which met the most rigorous measure of internal consistency (i.e., $\alpha = 0.8$; Nunnally, 1978). Teachers' attitude towards inclusive education was somewhat positive, but indicated that they still had doubts on how to practice it.

A number of researchers believe using descriptive statistics such as the mean to describe central tendency is not appropriate when scores are measured on an ordinal scale (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2004). For an ordinal item, such as a Likert-type scale, scores are in ordered categories and do not allow one to determine distance (Tejeda-Delgad, 2009). For such cases dealing with ordinal items, the median is consistently appropriate and a more accepted and preferred measure of central tendency than the mean (Tejeda-Delgad, 2009). Table 2 includes descriptive statistics of central tendency along with the median response for the original scale items.

Table 2

Analysis of Attitudes toward Inclusive Education Scale

Item No	Item	Mean	SD	Median
1.	Students whose academic achievement is 2 or more years below the other students in the grade should be in regular classes.	3.9	2.42	4.5
2.	Students who are physically aggressive toward their peers should be in regular classes.	4.5	2.12	5
3.	Students who cannot move without help from others should be in regular classes.	3.7	2.00	3.5
4.	Students who are shy and withdrawn should be in regular classes.	5.8	1.13	6
5.	Students whose academic achievement is 1 year below the other students in the grade should be in regular classes.	4.6	2.11	5.5
6.	Students whose speech is difficult to understand should be in regular classes.	5.2	1.22	6
7.	Students who cannot read standard print and need to use Braille should be in regular classes.	3.8	2.39	3.5
8.	Students who are verbally aggressive toward their peers should be in regular classes.	5.3	1.33	5.5
9.	Students who have difficulty expressing their thoughts verbally should be in regular classes	5.1	1.52	5.5
10.	Students who need training in self-help skills and activities of daily living should be in regular classes.	4.5	1.71	5
11.	Students who use sign language or communication boards should be in regular classes.	4.7	1.88	6
12.	Students who cannot control their behavior and disrupt activities should be in regular classes.	4.4	1.95	5.5
13.	Students who need an individualised functional academic program in everyday reading and math skills should be in regular classes.	4.1	1.85	4
14.	Students who cannot hear conversational speech should be in regular classes.	3.9	2.02	3.5
15.	Students who do not follow school rules for conduct should be in regular classes.	5.1	1.44	6
16.	Students who are frequently absent from schools should be in regular classes	5.7	1.15	6
Overall		4.64		

None of the items had a median score of seven, representing a central response of 'strongly agree'. Five of the items had a median score of six, representing a response of 'agree'. On the other hand, three of the items had a median of 3.5, representing the response of 'somewhat disagree' to 'neutral'. The respondents were more likely to respond with 'slightly disagree' to including three types of students with special needs into the mainstream classroom. Their concerns were primarily about students who could not move without help from others, students who could not read standard print and needed to use Braille and students who could not hear conversational speech. Unique skills and knowledge are often required to support these students appropriately in classroom environments.

The mean for overall items was 4.64, which denotes that teacher educators' attitudes towards inclusive education were somewhat positive, however reflected doubts on how to practice inclusive education.

3.2.2 Teaching Strategies

On a number of evidence-based strategies, participants rated their strategies and practices on a four point Likert scale ranging from Very often (4) to rarely/never (1). The scale originated from Mitchell's (2008) work on evidence-based practice. There was a chance to verify rated data with the interview and observation data. The following table shows participants' ratings towards their practices.

Table 3

Rating teaching strategies

No	Criteria	Rating (%)				Median
		Very often	Often	Occasionally	Rarely/ Never	
1.	I use mixed ability co-operative group teaching	17%	50%	33%	0%	3
2.	I use Peer Tutoring	0%	17%	33%	50%	2
3.	In my Lesson I review and practice the key ideas of previous lesson	33%	33%	17%	17%	3
4.	I evaluate all students' progress during lessons and adjust my teaching as a result	17%	33%	50%	0%	3
5.	I provide feedback to all students in my class	67%	0%	33%	0%	3
6.	I teach my students cognitive strategies; i.e. problem solving strategies	0%	17%	33%	50%	2
7.	I encourage my students to set goals and to evaluate their own progress in achieving them	0%	17%	50%	33%	2
8.	I teach my students a range of memory strategies*	17%	17%	16%	50%	2
9.	I assist my students to improve their reading comprehension by predicting, questioning and summarizing texts	17%	33%	17%	33%	2
10.	I use behavioral approaches in my teaching, especially in the case of students with behavioural difficulties	0%	17%	17%	66%	2
11.	I teach my students appropriate social skills	66%	17%	17%	0%	4
12.	I try to create a classroom climate safe, predictable and motivating	50%	17%	33%	0%	3
13.	I try to ensure my students have adequate time for learning	17%	17%	33%	33%	2
14.	I adapt the curriculum to suit the needs of all my students	0%	0%	0%	100%	1
15.	I adapt assessment methods to suit the needs of all my students	0%	0%	17%	83%	1
16.	I use available information and communication technology, including assistive technology for students with disabilities	17%	17%	16%	50%	2
17.	I actively co-operate with other professionals and teachers	33%	33%	34%	0%	3
18.	I actively involve parents in their children's programme	0%	17%	33%	50%	2
19.	In the case of beginning readers, I teach phonological processing (e.g., listening skills and phonics)	50%	33%	17%	0%	3
20.	My classroom environment (e.g. lighting, ventilation, sound) is optimal for learning	17%	33%	17%	33%	2

No	Criteria	Rating (%)				Median
		Very often	Often	Occasionally	Rarely/ Never	
21.	In the case of students' undesirable social behaviours, I analyze what purpose they serve and design ways of changing them	33%	33%	17%	17%	3
22.	I ensure that all my students achieve a 90 percent or better success rate on critical tasks	17%	33%	50%	0%	2

Only one of the items had a median score of four, representing a central response of 'very often'. On the other hand two of the items had median score of one, representing the response 'rarely/never.' These responses reflected the reality of education in Bangladesh. Participants had no scope to adapt curriculum or assessment. Eight of the items had a median score of three, representing a response of 'often'. Participants often introduced strategies such as mixed ability cooperative group teaching, review and practice, reflection on students' progress, feedback, ensuring safe classroom atmosphere, cooperation with other professional, phonological process, and behaviour modification. The respondents were more likely to respond 'occasionally' to practice 11-strategies in the mainstream classroom. These are peer tutoring, cognitive strategies, self-learning by setting goals, memory strategies, reading comprehension, behavioural approaches, information technology, and ensuring better achievement of the students.

Many of the teaching strategies reported to support inclusive education were used by respondents. Fifty percent of participants often used mixed ability co-operative group teaching, whereas in the case of pair tutoring, 50% of teachers' response was 'never'. Two thirds of the respondents are positive about reviewing and practicing the key ideas of previous lessons. Only 17% of the respondents could regularly evaluate all students' progress during lessons and adjust their teaching as a result. Most of the respondents (67%) provided feedback during the session regularly. Half of the participants (50%) had never tried cognitive strategies in their classroom, whereas half of the respondents (50%) occasionally encouraged their students to set goals and to evaluate their (students') own progress in achieving them.

All respondents thought that creating a classroom climate that was safe, predictable and motivating was their first priority in teaching. Surprisingly, none of the respondents had regular communication with parents. Half of the respondents (50%) preferred phonological processing (e.g., listening skills and phonics) in their class to help ensure students' achievement of a 90 percent or better success rate on critical tasks.

3.2.3 Open-ended Questions

In response to the question about the level of interaction with a person with a disability, five out of six respondents indicated they had not had any remarkable interactions. Having no remarkable interaction may

create confusion regarding the abilities and capabilities of students with disabilities in mainstream schools. One respondent mentioned that the key feature of the local legislation on disability is to teach students with disabilities separately. Interestingly, this interpretation would seem to be the opposite of what is stipulated in the original text.

Most of the participants (67%) had experienced very short orientations on inclusive education, which they received during their subject-based continuous professional development in-service training course. The training had a very limited focus on students with disabilities. Having no focus of disability in training could construct a conceptual barrier for inclusion. Without training and support, inclusive educational practices are likely to be difficult to implement.

It is imperative for teachers to have knowledge on legislation of disability and inclusive education. Data indicate that 50% ($n = 3$) of the participants had poor knowledge on disability legislation. One third reported that they had no knowledge of the legislation. Commenting on local legislation, especially on the 'Disability Welfare Act 2001' (Ministry of Social Welfare, 2001), one teacher commented "This act and the CRC should be included in all the in-service training session."

Along with assessing attitude, the survey also examined the confidence level of the respondents in teaching students with disabilities. Responses indicate that most of them have average confidence in working with

students with disabilities and that they seek external support to develop confidence.

An additional question posed was: “What is the main barrier in education for a student with a disability?” Responding to this open-ended question, the respondents identified five main barriers prior to the context. These are –

- lack of access to mainstream education;
- low [or lack of] expectations of teachers and peers;
- negative attitudes of family and non-disabled peers;
- lack of a friendly atmosphere in the classroom;
- demanding special attention.

The highest number (66%) of the respondents said that their professional orientation was not enough to cover the needs of the different types of learners. They also expressed their concern regarding the evaluation system. All of the respondents (100%) agreed that rethinking appropriate academic evaluation for different types of learners in the same class was an appropriate strategy.

3.3 Findings from Observations

A descriptive analysis of the responses based on field notes was conducted. One guideline for observing classroom activity sequentially and one checklist for rating teaching strategies was considered to obtain contextual data.

3.3.1 Teaching-Learning Strategies

In between two interviews, two classroom observations were made within a one week period. The findings explore the natural situation of the classroom. It was observed that classroom teaching skills, such as professional skills and attitudes includes discipline, attitude, presentation, responsiveness, feedback, planning, content knowledge, communication, group management, methods and classroom management, engagement, questioning, teaching aids, relationships, and evaluation. The observation results demonstrate that in most cases participants were partially responsive to the needs of their class. Most of the teachers had no formal lesson plan – stating that they just came up with the planning in their heads. Some teachers did not appear well-prepared for class.

In the case of content knowledge, participants showed that they were enthusiastic, and that they had in-depth knowledge. This is likely due to them all having taken Bangla literature during their undergraduate studies. They showed confidence in teaching, but a number of them appeared helpless towards the needs of students with disabilities and challenged by the large class sizes. Participants' concepts regarding the focus of the lessons were clear in most of the cases.

In case of communication, most of the teachers were well-versed when communicating with students and when the groups included disabled students. In a particular class, a teacher asked 13 questions to the

students. None of the disabled or students seated at the back of the class was asked. It was found that the teachers displayed a minor colloquial accent in pronunciation, but as a teacher of Bangla, they were devoted to teaching pronunciation and spelling. In most of the cases, they were limited in their proximity to students. Three teachers were confined near the lecture table and blackboard, but two moved about the class to supervise students' task.

Observation data reflected the teachers' strategies for managing group work. For every group, the teacher nominated one group leader. However, none of the groups had a team leader who was disabled. There was a lack of monitoring and supervision of group work. It may be due to the congested classroom with fixed benches (seating arrangement). Most of the respondents did not supervise the activities of students with disabilities in the group. Two respondents showed their eagerness of monitoring and supervising group activities. One of them visited every group and facilitated discussions to make their ideas clear. On the other hand, several teachers experienced problems in group management due mostly to the large class sizes. Two teachers were unable to finish their group activities within the stipulated amount of time.

During the observations it was apparent that respondents tried to engage their students in the lessons. In most of the cases, student engagement did not appear frequent or on task. In the case of students with disabilities,

the frequency of engagement was very low. It was found that in a class, no students with disabilities asked any questions, whereas 16 other students asked questions. In order to motivate students, teachers used a number of activities. Two teachers explained the learning outcomes first, whereas another teacher wrote down the difficult words on the blackboard and discussed the meaning of these words before proceeding with lesson. Three other teachers simply reviewed their previous class. Teachers were observed providing verbal praise to students. In most cases, teachers encouraged students to ask questions and teachers themselves also posed questions to students. Some teachers used direct questioning whereas others used more indirect or open questions. However, very few questions were asked to students with disabilities.

3.3.2 Evaluating Teaching Learning Activities

This analysis presents the findings in relation to teachers' preferences with regards to how they perceive evidence-based practice. Based on the analytical memos, it could be concluded that the majority of the respondents were not using evidence-based practice. Participant observations reveal that most of the teachers evaluate their students by asking questions, and a few with assigned homework tasks. Making the atmosphere safe and interesting appeared to be the priority for teachers. A portion of teachers' time was often allocated to teach social skills in relation to the lesson. Observations of participants affirm

that there was no use of peer tutoring and teachers provided limited support for self-regulated learning. No parental involvement was observed throughout all observations.

Chapter 4

Discussion

4.1 Discussion

This study attempted to contribute to the vision of a better future for students with disabilities in Bangladesh. It also set out to understand and describe the inclusive education practice for children with disabilities at secondary school in Bangladesh. To answer the research questions, information was collected by phenomenological interviews, participant observations and questionnaire. This chapter discusses the findings presented in the previous chapters with reference to the literature and presents implications of these findings.

The findings reveal that participants reported a diverse range of experiences, beliefs and attitudes relevant to inclusive education practices. Participants understood inclusion as being ‘about values and morality’, ‘a motion or action of teaching everyone in the same classroom’, ‘a promise’, ‘pull-out strategies’, and even ‘problematic’. At the same time, participants found no other valid alternative to inclusive education for students with disabilities in Bangladesh. Special education institutes are costly and limited to municipal areas. As a result education of a large number of students with disabilities is depending on successful implementation of inclusive education at secondary school.

The Bangladesh education system stipulates that students with disabilities have the right to attend their local schools (CSID, 2002). The Convention on the Rights of Peoples with Disabilities [CRPD] (UN, 2006) is now a legal obligation, and must be reflected in education contexts. Article 3 '*General Principles*' and Article 24 on education, strongly advocates for inclusive education and rejects all other forms of education for students with disabilities. The successful implementation of these national policies depends upon the belief that inclusive schooling is a moral obligation of society which without equity within schools does not and cannot exist (Snell & Janney, 2000).

The participant teachers in this study were in the middle of a transition period. The Bangladesh education system will continue to move towards inclusion. As these teachers are potential agents of the changing world, we must embrace such change, as Joseph Kisanji (1999) said,

Change will be more painful to those of us who have made a living out of, and wield some power in, special education. However, if we believe in 'Education for All', we need to surrender the power we hold and work collaboratively to create effective schools and inclusive education. (p.13)

Participants agreed that a combined effort is needed to make schools inclusive. This is likely to require effort in the community, from parents to teachers, personnel to policymakers and administrators (Epstein & Elias, 1996). In the current study, the teachers' concerns were

concentrated around three issues, which were relationships between students with and without disabilities, teaching strategies, and managing strategies for a large class. These findings shared some similarity with Idol's (2006) report that adaptation of instruction, modification of curriculum, student discipline and classroom management were the challenges for teachers in an inclusive classroom.

Participant comments that indicated an understanding of inclusive education practice included 'ensuring equal rights', 'transforming as mentally strong', , 'enhancing mechanism of student's cooperation, 'means of increasing participation', 'opening of a rewarding perspective', and 'scope of social integration'. Such experiences and understanding of participants could be explained from the literature of the Salamanca declaration.

Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all. (UNESCO, 1994, p.viii)

In line with this statement, the respondents found inclusion to be a means of uplifting acceptance of students with disabilities in the classroom as well as in society. Findings show that their perceptions of inclusive education practice descended from a rights-based approach. Respondents believed that getting support from others in terms of assistive aids and appliances could help to establish the rights of children with disabilities.

This is consistent with children with disabilities being eligible for equal access to printed materials, supporting aids and appliances to support them to overcome barriers in education (Rahaman, 2008).

Studies have shown that the rate of inclusion in the general classroom of students with disabilities has increased considerably in recent years (Cook, Cameron & Tankersley, 2007). As a result, inclusive practices are affecting virtually every aspect of contemporary schooling (Cook, Cameron & Tankersley, 2007). The teachers in this study appear to be looking for appropriate intervention strategies to support and enhance their inclusive education practice. However, findings also reveal that ensuring a friendly learning atmosphere for all students was a challenging task for the teachers; few of them thought it was the most essential part of their daily duties. Research shows that if an appropriate learning environment is developed, students with multiple disabilities can achieve success in educational settings (Kravets, 2006).

Including students with disabilities helped bring about positive changes in others' mindsets. At the same time it encouraged students with disabilities to become self-confident. This finding is consistent with previous research that demonstrated educating students with disabilities positively changed the mindset of teachers and students (Cook, Cameron & Tankersley, 2007). Furthermore, Daniel and King (1997) reported the positive impact of inclusive education on students' academic achievement.

Engaging students in the classroom activities is a key responsibility of teachers. The teachers in this study reported their concentrated effort in creating opportunities for all students to share in learning activities, although respondents indicated that the main responsibility of a teacher within inclusive education was to make the atmosphere fair and satisfactory. In fact, a teacher's role has been considered as the centre of the whole teaching and learning process. Florian and Kershner (2009) stated that "the teacher's central role is to orchestrate these classroom practices drawing on the basic understanding of children, learning, teaching and curriculum which make teaching possible" (p.177). Teachers' cooperation with colleagues and students' families helped a few of them to be successful, because "knowledge develops through shared activity in social contexts" (Florian, & Kershner, 2009, p.175), which echoes socio-cultural theory (Florian & Kershner, 2009; Lupton, 1999; Mahn, 1999).

Support from parents is a vital factor for student success (Melnechenko & Horsman, 1998). However, half of the respondents in the current study had no contact with students' parents, but they had an understanding that cooperation with parents would help to get a clearer picture regarding the student's context. Developing effective communication with parents is likely to benefit the school as a whole (Dorfman & Fisher, 2002). There was no evidence of the existence of any individualised educational plans (IEPs) for any of students with disabilities. However, a few respondents

noted diary and journal writing for class preparation in general. Literature showed that IEPs proved effective to directing students' progress in the right way (MoE [NZ], 1999; 2000).

Findings identify the significant barriers for the achievement of truly inclusive educational practices in Bangladesh. The barriers are multidimensional and the challenges are enormous. Respondents identify that societal negative attitudes, inaccessible surroundings, very large class sizes, high cost of opportunities where child labour is prevalent, and lack of teachers' professional preparation. On the other hand, challenges become more compounded due to the limited access in decision making, and having no professional support systems or mechanisms. Compounding these problems are personal challenges experienced by teachers (e.g., excessive class loads; low wages and social status) that are also likely to act as barriers to inclusive practice, although many of these barriers could be partially solved by the development of positive attitudes. As Snell and Janney (2000) stated the key to successful inclusion is in the willingness of key stakeholders and participants to visualise, work for and achieve a school, which is adaptive to and supportive of everyone.

Most respondents (83%) reported that existing professional orientation was not enough to cover the needs of teaching different types of learners. Respondents indicated that the existing teacher education was not up to the mark for supporting teachers to implement inclusive education for

students with disabilities. Ahsan and Burnip (2009) portrayed a similar picture within the same context. As a result, not having appropriate knowledge of inclusiveness and disabilities are making their efforts somehow questionable. Quantitative data show that participants realised that appropriate training for addressing inclusive issues should be initiated. Clement (2010) stated that “Without sufficient knowledge of classroom management strategies, new teachers may begin their careers striving to manage as they were managed” (p.42). Thus it is time that Bangladeshi educational agencies introduce effective training programmes for teachers. Clement (2010) found that if an educator does not have wisdom regarding education and pedagogy, he could find himself in trouble that may affect the overall education system of the country. Eventually, respondents voiced a common stance that inclusion is essential for children with disabilities, because only inclusive education recognises the need to work towards “schools for all” (UNESCO, 1994).

Participants experienced that the assessment and evaluation system was not perfect for students with disabilities. They were in a challenging situation due to the existing enrolment and evaluation system. The enrolment system is a barrier for students with disabilities to be included in schools. This was against the idea of schools for all of the Salmanka Declaration (UNESCO, 2004). Recently central concepts of students’ standards and schooling started to create tension, because raising the

achievement of all students within an inclusive setting was concerned with raising standards according to government requirements (Wallace, Montgomery, Winstanley, Pomerantz, & Fitton, 2009). As a result, the participants suggested creating flexibility within the system for students with disabilities. Participants were practicing both formative and summative assessment procedures. Participants identified that insistence on paper and pencil tests contributed to negative academic outcomes for students with disabilities. Ashworth, Bloxham, and Pearce (2009) identified a high level of tension between academic standards and inclusion for students with disabilities. Participants viewed assessment as the determiner of a child's progress towards a milestone or set of standards, which influenced them to take a more pragmatic stance.

Most of the participants were positive about the presence of children with disabilities in their classrooms, but several reported being challenged by teaching students with hearing impairments, visual impairments, and students with moderate intellectual disabilities. This report is consistent with research and practical experience suggesting that teaching children with high levels of special educational needs is very challenging (Wallace, et al., 2009).

Florian and Kershner (2009) raised a number of questions regarding educational goals and priorities to understand the implication of inclusive teaching, such as: "Teaching what? By whom to which students? In which context? Under what constraints?" (p.173). Interviews and

observations showed that in a few cases teachers had fragmented their knowledge from effective teaching. Teaching methods were utilised because they felt a need to and not necessarily based on any evidence. These reports do not support the idea of effective teaching, which could be characterised within inclusive phenomenon as “teaching where interventions are matched to the apparently unique characteristics of an individual or particular set of students” (Florian & Kershner, 2009, p.173).

In contrast, participants identified the factors contributing to success in the inclusive classroom. Participants provided opportunities to students with disabilities, and created a good atmosphere of equitable and fair teacher-student interactions. As a consequence, they consciously portrayed positive images of students with disabilities with great patience. Moreover, a number of teachers were careful about the potentiality of their students, because- “inclusive education offers a more just and equitable approach to responding to student diversity” (Florian, & Kershner, 2009, p. 173).

Even though the participants reported obstacles such as existing fixed furniture, large classrooms, and insufficient space for proximity in the class, they appeared to be knowledgeable about the issues of classroom management.. Participants noted put various initiatives such as ‘calling all students by their name’, ‘behaving positively with students’, ‘explaining the goals of the lesson’, ‘introducing quizzes at the end of

class', 'teach with confidence and authority', 'communicate clearly with students', 'developing a positive atmosphere', 'listening to the students carefully', and 'asking questions'. In fact, teaching strategies of the teachers were dependent on the individual learner's interests and needs, as the analysis identified that each teacher experienced problem situations differently.

Participants reported and were observed using a variety of teaching practices. They typically used traditional or modern evidence-based methods in their classroom as well as introducing their own modified methods that were thought better or more appropriate. Observation data show that respondents used teacher-centric methods most of the time. For example, the use of lectures, blackboards, reading aloud, discussions and teacher directed questioning. Respondents also perceived as the most effective teaching methods as cooperative group teaching, assignments, reviewing, group work, questioning, and brain storming. . The questionnaire data show that 83% of the respondents could not evaluate all students' progress during lessons. These participants reported experiencing problems in managing large class sizes. This reflects a level of uncertainty about their practice. However, Conner, Bickens and Bittman, (2009) found that creative teaching in combination with classic literature was effective in an inclusive classroom.

A focus of teachers' strategies is to make concepts clear. This resulted in participants attempting innovative strategies such as 'feedback

mechanisms' or 'peer assessment'. It was believed that if students could get the kind of instruction they needed, they could succeed. Moin, Magiera, and Zigmond (2009) reported that students with learning disabilities could succeed by getting needs-based instruction.

The qualitative data supports socio-cultural theory on inclusion, as Florian and Kershner (2009) stipulate "one of the implications of socio-cultural thinking is to acknowledge teaching as a complex activity in the collective experience of classroom learning in particular contexts" (p.178). Teachers showed their positive responses toward the issue. Moreover, all six teachers understood the phenomenon differently. This difference in understanding could be explained from a socio-cultural view, because of the emphasis on diversity of thinking, people and contexts (Florian and Kershner, 2009). Respondents' differences within their practice are the reflection of differences in knowledge and viewing the situation differently.

Clement (2010) reported the need for a quality lesson plan to reduce the incidence of problem behaviours. This supports the adage that lesson planning is very important for teaching. However, participants reflected a level of ignorance in preparing lesson plans. In order to build inclusive schools, the issues of inclusion should be reflected at the base level of lesson plans. Surprisingly, no lesson plan addressed such issues. In fact, without having a perfect classroom management plan in place (Clement, 2010), the chances of successful lesson outcomes are reduced. Thus, it is

the duty of administrators to encourage teachers to change their attitudes towards the preparation of lesson plans in order to develop inclusive education practices.

Respondents appeared to be interested in finding effective intervention strategies. However, many controversial issues exist in the field of special education (Atkinson, Hornby & Howard, 1997; Mitchell, 2008). The effective interventions are found in evidence-based practice, but teachers did not conceptualise as Lester (2007) did. According to him, the main principle of evidence-based practice is that it involves making decisions based on ‘evidence’ rather than on, for instance, untested theory, customary practice, political dogma or uncritical benchmarking. However, “Teachers’ experiences must be acknowledged and valued” (MacDonald, 2010, p. 431). The teachers reported incorporating their ways to do their best for all students. They consequently used feedback, collaborative learning and mind mapping. According to John Hattie’s mega meta-analysis research, the effective size for feedback is 0.73 (Hattie, 2009). A range of interventions were identified by the participants to be effective. Participants used techniques such as rearranging seating arrangements, quizzes, and linking with reality to bring about mental attention. Nevertheless, observation data confirmed that teaching aids were not sufficient. Participants used the blackboard, chalk, duster, globe, text books, pictures, black board, maps, models, and overhead projector as their teaching aids. However, participants thought

that the use of teaching aids depends on the content and student's needs. Brainstorming and ice-breaking strategies were also used to increase class attentiveness.

Even though methods that emphasise participation may create challenges in classroom management, participants reported effective use of these methods. It was reported as helpful in supporting the below average students to participate actively. Introducing cooperative group teaching by forming mixed ability groups helps all the students to achieve a targeted skill in a competitive environment. A few participants applied the peer method for teaching disabled students. Reinforcement such as a rewarding quiz, verbal praise and positive feedback helped to manage the classes. In teaching Bangla, participants found storytelling and role play, phonological methods, communicative approach, and review and practice to be useful. Dramatisation of the stories related to everyday life attracted students to the task and offered easy ways of remembering. Teachers were engaged in the supervision, monitoring and evaluation of their classroom activities. Respondents pointed out that it was very important to have an understanding of the students' progress and the most commonly reported method of recording progress was the provision of homework tasks and then analysing performance to determine what the student had learned.

The findings explore hidden disabilities as one of the untouched aspects of inclusive practice in secondary schools in Bangladesh. Respondents

reported that it was very common that there were some students whose impairment was not immediately noticeable or not obviously apparent. These students were classified as experiencing 'hidden disabilities', creating many challenges in inclusive settings. As a result, the classroom teacher may not be able to immediately recognise these students within his/ her class. That is why teachers were unable to provide any special attention to them for their special needs in learning. For example, it is evident that "as educators, we have a unique opportunity to help children reach their full potential, but we must first be aware of the special needs for the dyspraxia [hidden disability] child that should be acknowledged and appropriately addressed" (Stansell, 2007, p.2). Teachers were concerned with hidden disabilities, but they had limited ideas or knowledge on appropriate diagnostic mechanisms and intervention strategies regarding these students.

Respondents perceived that special knowledge on Braille and sign language was necessary in order to teach students with visual impairment and students with hearing impairment respectively. They also reported that students with severe intellectual disabilities should be placed in special education settings. However, throughout the study respondents were gradually embracing inclusion and constructing their meaning of being a teacher within an inclusive setting. According to the respondents, their practices now focused on: 'addressing issues of the students', 'to be prepared', and 'adopting strategies to teach all students'. Furthermore, a

teacher should be honest, committed to the task, and resourceful. Ownership within the institution to students for active participation could be an example of empowering the classroom. Empowering the classroom would be helpful to construct inclusive pedagogy, as Florian and Kershner (2009) found, “The element of inclusive pedagogy clearly spread beyond individual classrooms to include the beliefs, values and decision-making processes evident in the wider contexts of School and society” (p.175).

Participants suggested that government should take pragmatic steps to ensure access of students with disabilities to education, because the Constitution of Bangladesh affirmed equality of opportunity (article 19) and article 28 provides safeguards against all discriminations (Ministry of Law, Justice & Parliamentary Affairs, 2000). Comparing the responses from urban and rural school teachers shows that urbanisation does affect practice. Urban schools were perceived as more open to students with disabilities. On the other hand, the rural teacher had very limited scopes. In fact, the urban-rural gap has created a vacuum in the secondary schools in terms of quality of practice. Wallace, et al. (2009) found by their extensive analysis of twelve key schools, that there was a difference in practice between small rural schools and big inner-city community schools.

Respondents perceived social dialogue as a useful tool to get feedback and ideas to improve the conditions and pedagogic contexts, as agreed

upon by Littleton and Howe (2010). The findings show that dialogues between students and teachers contribute to developing inclusive environments in the classroom. Collaboration with colleagues and parents is at the centre of social dialogue, because social dialogue provides a clear, accessible and well-illustrated case for the development of learning and teaching (Littleton & Howe, 2010).

Both the interviews and observations indicated that the respondents had a willingness to move towards inclusive education. Two important findings emerged from the analysis. Firstly, teachers generally exhibited positive attitudes and beliefs about inclusive education (Mortier, Hunt, Leroy, van de Putte, & van Hove, 2010). Secondly, teachers also take the initiative to practice inclusive education in their classroom. So, it was suggested that despite the increasing popularity of inclusion reforms, their impact remains unclear. However, there was a point to many potential benefits of including students with disabilities (Cook, Cameron & Tankersley, 2007). In this case, building relationships was perceived as particularly useful, as Cavanagh claimed “relationships must be the central aim of education” (2008, p.21). This is because, the person who knows the child well in regular life environments has been proven to be invaluable in order to understand the child’s context to be able to think about realistic and appropriate supports (Mortier, et al., 2010).

Wallace, et al. (2009) reported findings which are applicable to all schools. Raising the achievement of all students within an inclusive

setting is needed to identify and resolve underachievement in schools. The respondents firmly believed that they could do better in time within an inclusive classroom.

Teachers' responsibility appeared to have changed due to differences of students within classrooms. Teachers reported thinking differently about students with disabilities. Florian and Kershner (2009) reported that "(Individual) differences among all learners do not have to be constructed as problems inherent within learners that are outside of the expertise of classroom teachers" (p.174). As classroom teachers, respondents were experimenting with their strategies to accommodate the needs of all children in their classes. Findings suggest that respondents were aware of students' need, because teachers need to listen to students and relate instructions with students' needs, because students want their teacher to be genuine (Melnechenko & Horsman, 1998).

Teachers faced a number of challenges when supporting a child with a disability in the inclusive classroom. Their challenges could be best expressed with the Ocean Liner analogy. They feel like an Ocean Liner in the deep ocean without radar. They could not set their direction. The ocean expresses the amount of their problems. According to the ecological system theory of Bronfenbrenner (2005), the challenges come from different levels, such as the micro-level that includes student factors, parent factors, sibling factors; the meso-level factor such as extended family, neighbour, friends and colleagues; the eco-factor like

radio, television, newspaper, education, health and social welfare factor; and finally from the macro system which includes ethnicity, religious, culture. Participants reported that their journey with inclusive education was at the inception point. They thought it was an appropriate time to change the schooling system. Beyond negative circumstances, one inspiration was clearly reflected in the survey. There prevails no doubt among the teachers regarding the potential of inclusive education. Most of the respondents were in favour of inclusive education, while only 33% believed that special education was still the best option for students with disabilities in Bangladesh. However, the top-down model of decision making and highly centralised curriculum fails to reflect the teachers' voices. The teachers who are in favour of special education, state that most of the regular schools of Bangladesh are not ready to include students with moderate to severe disabilities, which would mean that still no meaningful support system has been developed or introduced. The student with disabilities would get better service from special schools, and might have a better chance of acquiring some vocational skills along with academic skills. None of the participants had access to any therapy services (e.g., for students with physical and/ or speech and language disabilities) at the mainstream school.

One of the debates regarding including children with disabilities in general education arises from the findings may affect the quality as well

of performance of children without disabilities in the class. Research shows that the test performance of students without disabilities remained unaffected by the presence of students with disabilities in regular education classes (Idol, 2006). Recent empirical research shows that both quality and equity can be achieved through an inclusive education system (Acedo, Ferrer, & Pàmies, 2009).

4.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are drawn from the study findings with the intention of contributing to improvement in the inclusive education practices in Bangladesh. On reviewing the above theoretical frameworks, literature and policies, findings and discussion towards inclusive education for students with disabilities into the classroom, the following five general assumptions had been made to be reflected in practices:

- All children have a right to an effective education;
- Every child is a unique individual;
- All children, no matter what their functioning level, can learn;
- No single set of interventions or remedial procedures is effective under all conditions with all children;
- No matter how well designed and executed classroom intervention process may be, their effectiveness will be limited unless they target the function of the child's behaviour.

The information reported in this study provides the basis for the development of both a short-term and a long-term strategic plan for the development of inclusive education in Bangladesh. The UNESCO's (2001) nine golden rules of inclusive education (consisting of all

students, communication, managing classrooms, lesson planning, individual plans, individual help, assistive aids, managing behaviour, working together) will also support the development of such a strategic plan. Within this plan, there is a need to initiate in-depth professional orientation in inclusive pedagogy with a view to change teachers' tendency of following teacher-centric instructional approaches rather than student-centric approaches. Teachers also need to be supplied with adequate teaching aids – including the opportunity for teachers to access up-to-date technology in the classroom. It is also recommended modifying the teaching and learning environments including physical infrastructure as much as possible. For example, schools should take steps to reduce background noise in the classroom and consider new seating arrangements with movable furniture rather than fixed furniture. Schools could carry out comprehensive surveys within their catchment areas to identify potential students with disabilities. However, the value of inclusive education to learners comes from mixing and sharing with other children (Savic, 2007). The teachers need to encourage this to happen. On the other hand, it is high time to ensure the educational provisions for students with disabilities according to the options mentioned in the Disability Welfare Act 2001, such as creating an opportunity for free education for children with disabilities under 18 years of age, providing them with educational materials free of cost, and ensuring inclusive education.

Reforming policies are the second suggested target to ensure rights of students with disabilities as full and equal members of society and the right to enter into and benefit from education. Every school could form a disability resource team, headed by an assistant head teacher to carry out the policy reformation and other disability-related activities. If needed, a post of 'special educator' could be created in every school.

In Bangladesh, different superstitions are prevalent in the community, such as disability being a sign of punishment from God to parents as a result of committing a crime. These myths must be tackled in order to raise community awareness of the potential and rights of students with disabilities. In this regard, disability sensitisation issues would be included in all the school meetings (e.g., weekly teachers meeting, monthly meeting of the SMC, and meeting with parents) and continuous professional development training to raise awareness. Schools could also organise cultural shows focusing the rights and educational needs of students with disabilities under the direct supervision of the respective teachers. Teachers could form a drama or cultural team. Students with disabilities should be included in that team with their non-disabled peers.

It is evident from participants that managing the behaviour of a few students with disabilities was not so easy. However, children need to learn to behave in socially acceptable ways through guidance and counselling. In this respect, the Bangladeshi secondary education should

ensure referral, guidance and counselling at the school level is an essential element for inclusive education.

Empirical evidence suggests that the respondents were generally positive about educating students with disabilities in general schools, but they are not sure how to do implement this (Idol, 2006). This uncertainty appears mainly due to the absence of proper support, resources and knowledge. On the other hand, lack of appropriate technology is limiting the scope of inclusion (Idol, 2006). To overcome such circumstances, school-based resource centres and support services need to be established. To support these services, appropriate screening and assessment procedures must be implemented.

To ensure progress of students with disabilities, appropriate examination, evaluation and feedback systems need to be introduced. The establishment of a continuous evaluation and feedback systems to assess and maintain the quality of education. It is also necessary to reform the existing approaches and practices by identifying their drawbacks. In this regards, continuing evaluation and feedback systems could be initiated and practiced for assessing the academic performance of all learners, including students with disabilities.

To encourage students with disabilities in education, motivation and reward could be an effective measure. Ensuring enrolment and reduction in the dropout rate of students with disabilities should be the main aims. Building relationships are an important aspect of inclusion. Relationships

between teachers, teacher-student, parent-teacher, and community-schools are indispensable. To support relationship-building, schools could take several initiatives like forming an effective parent teacher association (PTA), organising various community events in the school, and using school buildings as a community centre on the weekend and holidays.

Appropriate initiatives need to be taken to make a bridge between the community and inclusive education. In fact, the community as a whole can provide better support to students (De Jong, 2005). Though the resources are limited, using local resources for systematic interventions for the promotion of education of student with disabilities could be a reasonable option for the school. In this regard, schools could undertake a resource identification survey, and afterwards establish effective communication with the potential resources. Educational related experts like speech therapists, educational audiologists, and educational psychologists should be appointed on a regional basis to support general teachers. On the other hand, parents should get proper guidance on their child's progress. They should get information on their child's strengths and weaknesses from the respective teachers as well as suggestions for home-based interactions to support the development.

Finally, the findings of the study indicate the demand for further research on issues related to the central phenomenon of inclusive education practice in the broader aspects. Research also needs to be undertaken in the micro level to identify different perspectives (such as parents, or students) of inclusive education practice. Another line of research that focuses on supporting teachers to determine how much simplification of curriculum or change of the learning environment will help students with disabilities cope comfortably with the inclusive education settings.

4.3 Implications of the Findings

The study identified the primary implications of the findings. The implications show that findings are applicable to facilitate education of children with disabilities within an inclusive setting. The key findings of this research are:

- help teachers to practice inclusive education.
- provide ideas, especially to parents, teachers, peers and other people about the potential of inclusive education practice.
- information to develop guidelines for policy makers within education sectors to take necessary steps for ensuring inclusive education for children with disabilities.
- the provision of information to classroom teachers to facilitate the education of children with disabilities while considering

appropriate strategies.

- support for teachers and parents of students with disabilities to design future educational plans for children.
- a reference for researchers in Bangladesh as well as other developing countries who may want to undertake further research on topics relating to inclusive education practice.
- observing the study findings teachers would be confident and will be inspired for their future practices for students with disabilities.
- information to support regular school authorities to provide equal chances in education for students with disabilities.

Conclusion

This study was significant because the concept of inclusive education is new to the secondary schools of Bangladesh educational context, where educations of a large number of students with disabilities are depending on successful implementation of inclusive education practice. As a result the study would explore the inclusive education from teachers' perspectives. Theoretically inclusive schooling is a moral obligation of the Bangladesh education system.

Two important findings emerged from the analysis. Teachers' attitudes and beliefs about inclusive education were somehow positive, and they take the initiative to practice inclusive education in their classroom. Teachers realised that inclusion could increase acceptance of students with disabilities both in the classroom and society. Not having the scopes to cover the needs of teaching students with hearing impairments, visual impairments, and students with moderate intellectual disabilities within existing professional orientation system, teachers were in a challenging situation to deal with. As a result, findings report a wide difference within participants' practice in the reflection of differences in knowledge and viewing the situation. The participants introduced their need-based teaching strategies. Due to the large class size and absence of support mechanism, teachers' practices are facing enormous challenges.

The findings of this study cannot be generalised beyond the sample. The contribution of this study, however, lies in demonstrating what can happen when teachers are committed to the accomplishment of the goal of improving the day-to-day practice of including students with disabilities. It shows that effective practices are often based on real-life (local) knowledge, mutual engagement and accountability, joint enterprise and shared repertoire of experiences with the child. However, Mortier, et al. (2010) expressed that the construction of ideas, committed to a successful and positive atmosphere could provide the best opportunities of getting an education for students with disabilities. Most of the teachers predicted that, if resources are available to support inclusion, and if there is adequate administrative support and appropriate infrastructure, teaching material and technological devices, then the aim of inclusive education will be successful.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Interview 1 Guideline for the Teachers

Place:

Date:

A. Background of the participant

- i) Name of the respondent
- ii) Designation
- iii) Age
- iv) Gender
- v) Highest level of education completed.
- vi) Previous Training (general and disability/inclusive education)
- vii) Time length of involvement in this job
- viii) Reasons for becoming a teacher
- ix) Interaction with peoples with disabilities
- x) Have you ever taught a student with a disability?
- xi) Level of confidence in teaching students with disabilities.
- xii) Knowledge of the Disability Welfare Act [BD] (2001)

Code		PreInt
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B. About the children with disabilities of your class

- i) Number of children with disabilities and types, gender and age
- ii) How did they get an educational placement and enrolment in this school?
- iii) Did children with disabilities arrive with previous training, for example speech and language training?
- iv) How would you consider their academic condition (progress, interest, interaction, difficulties, acceptance) (describe critically).
- v) What are the barriers in education for a student with a disability?

C. About inclusive practice

- i) What do you think about or understand to be inclusive education?
- ii) What do you think the idea of Inclusive education?
- iii) How do you put Inclusion into practice?
- iv) Do you think inclusive education is helpful for students? Why? Explain.

Prompts

Inclusive education is...

I am not clear about the . . .

What do you mean by....?

Tell me more...?

Did I get you correctly...

Can you give me another example of that...

How? Why? Really?

Appendix 2

Participant Observation Schedule

Observation no-

Code-

		1 / 2
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Date of observation-

Time-

Diagram- Seating arrangement (focusing CWDs)

	Boys	Girl
Total student		
Present		
CWDs		
*CWDs-Children with Disabilities		

A. Details of classroom activity-

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B. Guideline for observing teaching-learning activities

	Criteria	Comments
1.	Professional skills and attitude (Discipline, attitude, Presentation, responsiveness, Feedback)	
2.	Plan (Goal and lesson plan, preparedness)	
3.	Content knowledge (Depth, Confidence, concept)	
4.	Communication (Pronunciation, proximity, eye-contact)	
5.	Group Management (time, group formation, monitoring and supervision)	
6.	Methods and classroom management Using different methods, seating arrangement	
7.	Engagement Motivating the student, engaging them with works	
8.	Questioning	
9.	Teaching aids Use of aids and black board	
10.	Relationship Student-student-teacher	
11.	Evaluation	

c. Scale for evaluating strategies for enhancing learning: Evaluating practice

No	Criteria	Rating				Comments
		A	B	C	D	
1.	Employs co-operative group teaching					
2.	Employs Peer Tutoring					
3.	Regularly reviews and practices					
4.	Employs formative assessment					
5.	Provide Regular feedback					
6.	Provides cognitive strategy instruction					
7.	Encourages self-regulated learning					
8.	Teachers memory strategies					
9.	Employs reciprocal teaching					
10.	Employs behavioral approaches					
11.	Provides social skills instruction					
12.	Creates a positive classroom climate					
13.	Provides adequate active learning time					
14.	Adapts the curriculum					
15.	Adapts assessment methods					
16.	Uses available information and communication technology					
17.	Engages in collaborative teaching					
18.	Actively involves parents					
19.	Teachers phonological processing					
20.	Provides a physical environment that enables learning					
21.	Employs functional behavioral assessment skills					
22.	Ensure optional success					

Appendix 3

Questionnaire

On

Code		Qst
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Teacher practices and attitudes toward and concerns about inclusive education

Inclusive education means that all students with disabilities are mainstreamed and become the responsibility of the regular class teacher who is supported by specialists.

Please Rate Your Self about Your Strategies and Practices

No	Criteria	Rating			
		Very often	Often	Occasionally	Rarely/ Never
1.	I use mixed ability co-operative group teaching				
2.	I use Peer Tutoring				
3.	In my Lesson I review and practice the key ideas of previous lesson				
4.	I evaluate all pupils' progress during lessons and adjust my teaching as a result				
5.	I provide feedback to all pupils in my class				
6.	I teach my pupils cognitive strategies; i.e. problem solving strategies				
7.	I encourage my pupils' to set goals and to evaluate their own progress in achieving them				
8.	I teach my pupils a range of memory strategies*				
9.	I assist my pupils to improve their reading comprehension by predicting, questioning and summarizing texts				
10.	I use behavioral approaches in my teaching, especially in the case of pupils with behavioural difficulties				
11.	I teach my pupils appropriate social skills				
12.	I try to create a classroom climate safe, predictable and motivating				
13.	I try to ensure my pupils have adequate time for learning				
14.	I adapts the curriculum to suit the needs of all my pupils				
15.	I adapt assessment methods to suit the needs of all my pupils				
16.	I use available information and communication technology, including assistive technology for pupils with disabilities				
17.	I actively co-operate with other professionals and teachers				
18.	I actively involve parents in their children's programme				
19.	In the case of beginning readers, I teach phonological processing (e.g., listening skills and phonics)				
20.	My classroom environment (e.g. lighting, Ventilation, sound) is optimal for learning				

21.	In the case of pupils' undesirable social behaviours, I analyze what purpose they serve and design ways of changing them				
22.	I ensure that all my pupils achieve a 90 percent or better success rate on critical tasks				
23.	I use other strategies (please mention)				
24.					
25.					

*** Please describe one**

Attitudes toward Inclusive Education Scale

This scale concerns "inclusive education" as one method of teaching students with disabilities in the regular school environment.

Please place one number next to each question that describes how you usually feel.

On the blank line, please place the number indicating your reaction to every item according to how much you agree or disagree with each statement. Please provide an answer for every item.

Strongly Agree 7	Agree 6	Agree Somewhat 5	<u>Neutral</u> 4	Disagree Somewhat 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
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- _____ 1. Students whose academic achievement is 2 or more years below the other students in the grade should be in regular classes.
- _____ 2. Students who are physically aggressive toward their peers should be in regular classes.
- _____ 3. Students who cannot move without help from others should be in regular classes.
- _____ 4. Students who are shy and withdrawn should be in regular classes.
- _____ 5. Students whose academic achievement is 1 year below the other students in the grade should be in regular classes.
- _____ 6. Students whose speech is difficult to understand should be in regular classes.
- _____ 7. Students who cannot read standard print and need to use Braille should be in regular classes.
- _____ 8. Students who are verbally aggressive toward their peers should be in regular classes.
- _____ 9. Students who have difficulty expressing their thoughts verbally should be in regular classes.
- _____ 10. Students who need training in self-help skills and activities of daily living should be in regular classes.

- _____ 11. Students who use sign language or communication boards should be in regular classes.
- _____ 12. Students who cannot control their behavior and disrupt activities should be in regular classes.
- _____ 13. Students who need an individualised functional academic program in everyday reading and math skills should be in regular classes.
- _____ 14. Students who cannot hear conversational speech should be in regular classes.
- _____ 15. Students who do not follow school rules for conduct should be in regular classes.
- _____ 16. Students who are frequently absent from schools should be in regular classes

Other Comments on **Inclusive Education**

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION IN
COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

Appendix 4

Interview 2 : Guideline for the Teachers

Code		PostInt
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A) About children with disabilities in your classroom

1. Describe a typical day with children with disabilities in your class?
2. How students with disabilities were included in your class?
3. What were your feelings then? Do you think that this is (your class/school) the appropriate place for the disabled students?
4. Did you find any problem because of the enrolment of those students?
5. Does the presence of children with disabilities hamper your quality of life or teaching-learning activities?
6. Do you feel any challenges to manage children with disabilities in the class?
7. When you find any problem with them, where do you sought for help?
8. Do you have teaching assistants or teaching staff to help them? Do you think it is important to have? Why?
9. How do peer group treat with the impaired student? Did you give them any lesson? If yes, what is that? Please provide an example.
10. How do parents of PWDs interact with you and support you in academic activities? Do you find any frustration among them?
11. Do the children with special needs have access to specialised services, such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling, hearing services, speech therapy, crisis management, mobility services or vision services?
12. Are there any specialists say, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, who from time to time help teachers address the special needs of the children with disabilities within the classroom?

13. Are there materials or special aids for facilitating specific communication needs of children, including lessons in Braille, sign language, drawing or use of audio-tapes?

B) Academic activities related information

1. Do you offer any extra tutorial support for the PWDS? If yes, please specify.....
2. How much time is Given for extra support? (Total Amount, approximately):
3. Do you find any particular difficulty to teach any special subject for children with disabilities?
4. Which subject do you think children with disabilities find easier or harder? Why?
5. Do you feel that if get Support from professional you would do better? Why?
6. Please Comments on Progress/academic achievement of children with disabilities comparison with children without disabilities.
7. How do you communicate with the children with disabilities in the class?
8. The seating arrangements into the class room. Who suggested this arrangement?
9. How do you assess the progress of performance of children with disabilities? Is it difficult or easy?

C) General areas of information

1. Highlight mechanisms and strategies which have proved effective in making the initiatives successful and identify the factors which contributed to the success.
2. Identify the areas of concerns and constraints.
3. Focus on the issues and opportunities that need to be addressed for successful mainstreaming of children with disabilities.
4. Highlight the main implications of the lessons learned.
5. Provide recommendations based on the lessons learned.
6. What should be an ideal role of a classroom teacher for teaching into inclusive environment?
7. Comments on educational rights of CWDs and inclusive education.
8. How would you like to see inclusive education in Bangladesh?
9. Any special comment.....

Prompts

Inclusive education is...

I am not clear about the . . .

What do you mean by....?

Tell me more...?

Did I get you correctly...

Can you give me another example of that...

How? Why? Really?

Date of interview

Place of interview

Interview by

Note: This schedule is just like a guideline. It might be changed after observation if needed

Appendix 5

Information Letter for Teachers

mmr57@uclive.ac.nz

Cell- +64226429188 (NZ)

+8801711958348 (Ban)



August 27, 2010

Name

Designation,

Address

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Project Title: Inclusive Education Practice for Secondary School Students
with Disabilities in Bangladesh**

My name is Muhammed Mahbubur Rahaman and I am a teacher educator from Bangladesh, working towards a Masters of Education at the College of Education, University of Canterbury. My study is called 'Inclusive Education Practice for Secondary School Students with Disabilities in Bangladesh'. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand and describe the inclusive education practice for children with disabilities at secondary school in Bangladesh. I have defined inclusive practice as a system that serves all students adequately in regular classrooms with the required support. I will be working under the supervision of Dr. Dean Sutherland, Senior Lecturer in Child Development and Early Intervention in the Health Science Centre of the College of Education, along with Professor David M. Mitchell, Adjunct Professor, University of Canterbury, New Zealand.

Data will be collected from interviews with teachers conducted on two occasions within a seven day period (during September/October, 2011) followed by two classroom observations. In the interview, I will ask predetermined questions about teachers' experience of inclusive practices. Each interview should take 40-50 minutes to complete and will be completed during lunch hour. The sequence of study activities will be (1) (day 1) interview focused on general inclusive education and children with disabilities; (2) (day 2) observation in classroom; (3) (day 3) observation two, and; (4) (day 8) final interview and questionnaire. Questionnaires will focus on classroom strategies and practices, and teacher attitudes towards inclusive education.

Please note that participation in this study is voluntary. If you do participate, you have the right to decline to answer any questions and to withdraw from the study at any time prior to publication. All data will be treated confidentially and anonymity will be preserved at all times. As part of the research process, the researcher will undertake both interviews and observations. Your interview will be recorded on an audiotape recorder. No information that could identify any individual participant will be published. Pseudonyms will be used to maintain the anonymity of participants. All data is to be securely stored in password protected facilities and/or preserved by me for five years following the study. After 5 years, the data will be destroyed. If desired, all participants will receive a report on the findings of this study and a copy of any resulting publication.

Please contact me if you have any further queries or concerns about the project or would like to be informed of the research findings. I can be reached by phone on +8801711958348 or by email mmr57@uclive.ac.nz. If you have a complaint about the study, you may contact Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam, Joint Secretary & Project Director, TQI-SEP, Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), Bangladesh, Dhaka (email-nazrul@tqi-sep.org), or the chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag-4800, Christchurch (email- human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz).

Moreover, the project has received permission from the DG, DSHE, Bangladesh.

If you agree to be a part of this research, please sign and return the attached consent form in the envelope provided by Day/Date/Month. Please be advised that you can withdraw at any time by contacting the researcher.

With Warm Regards,

Muhammed Mahbubur Rahaman

Lecturer (Education), OSD,

Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education,

Dhaka, Bangladesh-1000.

Note:

1. This project has received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee

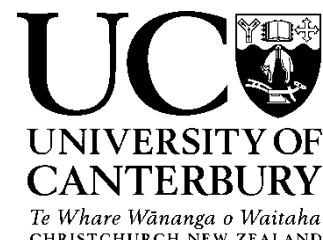
Appendix 6

Informed Consent to Participate from Teachers

mmr57@uclive.ac.nz

Cell- +64226429188 (NZ)

+8801711958348 (Ban)

**Declaration of Consent to Participate**

I agree to participate in a research study of Inclusive Education Practice for Secondary School Students with Disabilities in Bangladesh. I have read and understood the information provided about this research project. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time prior to publication of the findings. I understand the purpose and nature of this study and I am participating voluntarily. I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and that any published or reported results will not identify me or my institution. I understand that all data from this research will be stored securely for five years following the study. I understand that I will receive a report on the findings of this study and have provided my mailing/email details below for this purpose. If I have any complaints, I can contact Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam, Joint Secretary & Project Director, TQI-SEP, Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), Bangladesh, Dhaka (email-nazrul@tqi-sep.org), or the chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag-4800, Christchurch (email- human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz). Moreover, I understood that the project has received permission from the Director General, DSHE, Bangladesh.

By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project and grant my permission for the data to be use in the process of completing an M.Ed degree, including a thesis and any other future publications. I also grant permission for interviews and observations to be audio-recorded.

Name:

Date:

Signature:

Email:

*Please **return this completed consent form** in the envelope provided by
28/08/2010*

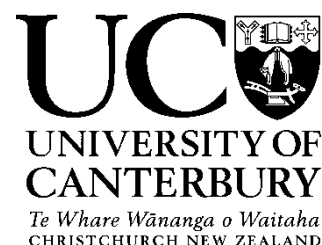
Thank you for your contribution to this study.

Appendix 7

Information Letter for Head Teacher/ Principal

mmr57@uclive.ac.nz

Cell- +64226429188 (NZ)
+8801711958348 (Ban)



Address of Recipient

Date/Month/Year

Dear(Principal/Head Teacher)

**Inclusive Education Practice for Secondary School Students with
Disabilities in Bangladesh**

Information for Principal/ Head Teacher

My name is Muhammed Mahbubur Rahaman and I am a teacher educator from Bangladesh, working towards a Masters of Education at the College of Education, University of Canterbury. My study is called 'Inclusive Education Practice for Secondary School Students with Disabilities in Bangladesh'. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand and describe the inclusive education practice for children with disabilities at secondary school in Bangladesh. I have defined inclusive practice as a system that serves all students adequately in regular classrooms with the required support. I will be working under the supervision of Dr. Dean Sutherland, Senior Lecturer in Child Development and Early Intervention in the Health Science Centre of the

College of Education, along with Professor David M. Mitchell, Adjunct Professor, University of Canterbury, New Zealand.

Data will be collected from interviews with teachers conducted on two occasions within a seven day period (during September/October, 2011) followed by two classroom observations. In the interview, I will ask predetermined questions about teachers' experience of inclusive practices. Each interview should take 40-50 minutes to complete and will be completed during lunch hour. The sequence of study activities will be (1) (day 1) interview focused on general inclusive education and children with disabilities; (2) (day 2) observation in classroom; (3) (day 3) observation two, and; (4) (day 8) final interview and questionnaire. Questionnaires will focus on classroom strategies and practices, and teacher attitudes towards inclusive education.

Please note that participation in this study is voluntary. If you do participate, you have the right to decline to answer any questions and to withdraw from the study at any time prior to publication. All data will be treated confidentially and anonymity will be preserved at all times. As part of the research process, the researcher will undertake both interviews and observations. Your interview will be recorded on an audiotape recorder. No information that could identify any individual participant will be published. Pseudonyms will be used to maintain the anonymity of participants. All data is to be securely stored in password protected facilities and/or preserved by me for five years following the study. If desired, all participants will receive a report on the findings of this study and a copy of any resulting publication.

Please contact me if you have any further queries or concerns about the project or would like to be informed of the research findings. I can be reached by phone on +8801711958348 or by email mmr57@uclive.ac.nz. If you have a complaint about the study, you may contact Mr. Md. Nazrul

Islam, Joint Secretary & Project Director, TQI-SEP, Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), Bangladesh, Dhaka ([email-nazrul@tqi-sep.org](mailto:nazrul@tqi-sep.org)), or the chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag-4800, Christchurch (email- human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz). Moreover, the project has received permission from the DG, DSHE, Bangladesh.

If you agree to this research being undertaken in your school, please sign and return the attached consent form.

Thank you.

Muhammed Mahbubur Rahaman

Lecturer (Education), OSD,

Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education,

Dhaka, Bangladesh-1000.

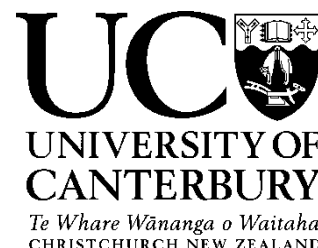
-
- This project has received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee

Appendix 8

Declaration of Consent to Participate (From School)

mmr57@uclive.ac.nz

Cell- +64226429188 (NZ)
+8801711958348 (Ban)

**Declaration of Consent to Participate (from School)**

I agree on behalf of my institution to participate in a research study of *Inclusive Education Practice for Secondary School Students with Disabilities in Bangladesh*. I have read and understood the information provided about this research project. I understand that participation in this research is voluntary and that my school may withdraw at any time prior to publication of the findings. I understand that all information will be kept confidential to the researcher and that any published or reported results will not identify me or my institution. I understand that all data from this research will be stored securely for five years following the study. I understand that my institution will receive a report on the findings of this study and have provided my mailing/email details below for this purpose.

If I have any complaints, I can contact Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam, Joint Secretary & Project Director, TQI-SEP, Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), Bangladesh, Dhaka (email-nazrul@tqi-sep.org), or the chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag-4800, Christchurch (email- human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz).

Moreover, I understood that the project has got permission from the DG, DSHE, Bangladesh

By signing below, I agree to participate on behalf of my school in this research project and grant my permission for the data to be used in the process of completing an M.Ed degree, including a thesis and any other future publications. I also grant permission to audio-recording of the classroom observations. I also understand that the researcher will obtain the consent of the classroom teacher before interviews and observations are carried out.

Name:

Date:

Signature:

Email :

*Please **return this completed consent form** in the envelope provided by
Day/Date/Month*

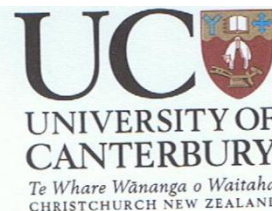
Thank you for your contribution to this study

Appendix 9

Ethical Approval Letter from ERHIC

Human Ethics Committee

Tel: +64 3 364 2241, Fax: +64 3 364 2856, Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz



Ref: 2010/56/ERHEC

13 October 2010

Muhammed Mahbubur Rahaman
2/25 Newnham Terrace
Upper Riccarton
CHRISTCHURCH

Dear Muhammed

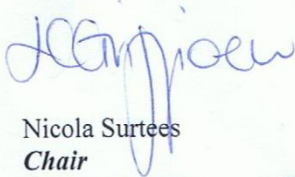
Thank you for providing the revised documents in support of your application to the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee. I am very pleased to inform you that your research proposal "Inclusive education practice for secondary school students with disabilities in Bangladesh" has been granted ethical approval.

Please note that should circumstances relevant to this current application change you are required to reapply for ethical approval.

If you have any questions regarding this approval please let me know.

We wish you well for your research.

Yours sincerely


PP Nicola Surtees
Chair
Educational Research HEC

"Please note that Ethical Approval relates only to the ethical elements of the relationship between the researcher, research participants and other stakeholders. The granting of approval or clearance by the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee should not be interpreted as comment on the methodology, legality, value or any other matters relating to this research."

Appendix 10

**Permission from Appropriate Authority of Bangladesh and Consent
of the Local Contract**

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education
Shikkha Bhaban, Dhaka-1000

The Chair
Educational Research Human Ethics Committee (ERHEC)
University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand

Subject: Permission for the Bangladeshi Teacher Educators studying for Master of Education at the University of Canterbury to conduct research on Bangladesh Education.


Dear Sir/Madam

The following 14 Bangladeshi Teacher Educators studying Master of Education at the University of Canterbury are hereby given permission to conduct research in the education sector of Bangladesh as a part of their Master of Education program.

Sl.No	Name and Designation
1	Mollah Mohammed Haroon- Ar-Rasheed, OSD (Lecturer, English), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
2	Tania Afreen Khan, OSD (Lecturer, Guidance & Counselling), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
3	Niger Sultana, OSD (Lecturer, Bangla), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
4	Md. Ariful Haq Kabir (Lecturer, Sociology), IER, Dhaka University (on Education Leave)
5	Mohammad Ali, OSD (Assistant Professor, English), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
6	Md. Ahasanul Arefin Chowdhury, OSD (Lecturer, Education), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
7	Md. Safayet Alam, OSD (Assistant Professor, Physics), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
8	Nazma Purvin, OSD (Lecturer, Mental Hygiene), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
9	Muhammed Mahbubur Rahman, OSD (Lecturer, Education), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
10	Abu Nayeem Mohammad Salauddin (Lecturer, Educational Administration), . IER, Dhaka University (on Education Leave)
11	Ranjit Poddor, OSD (Assistant Professor, English), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
12	Sanjoy Kumar Mazumder, OSD (Lecturer, English), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
13	Mst. Shailla Banu, OSD (Lecturer, Physics), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh
14	Sheikh Mohammad Ali, OSD (Lecturer, Education), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh

It will be ensured that the researchers have their consent of participation before they start their research; guarantee confidentiality of data and individuals; avoid unnecessary deception; pose no risk to any participants; and their behaviour consistent with the Treaty of Waitangi obligations.

If any complications arise at any stage of the research, the ERHEC is advised to contact Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam, Joint Secretary & Project Director, TQI-SEP (Phone: 9562228, Email:nazrul@tqi-sep.org).


 (Professor Md. Noman Ur Rashid)
 Director General
 Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education
 Shikkha Bhaban, Dhaka-1000